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THE ALBERTA SOCIAL CREDIT PARTY:
AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF MEMBERSHIP, CHARACTERISTICS,
PARTICIPATION AND OPINIONS

by



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A THESIS

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FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE ALBERTA SOCIAL CREDIT PARTY: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF MEMBERSHIP, CHARACTERISTICS, PARTICIPATION, AND OPINIONS, submitted by Owen A. Anderson, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

ABSTRACT

This thesis arose from a general interest in Alberta politics: its history, and the political behaviour and political psychology of Albertans. Its specific subject is the Alberta Social Credit Party. In spite of the fact that for more than half of its existence as a Province, the Social Credit Party was the decisive influence in Alberta politics, no empirical study of the party membership had ever been carried out until this present effort was undertaken. One goal of this present analysis is to rectify that situation by focussing on the actual party membership; and, since the party is now out of office, this study will remain the only empirical study of membership ever to be carried out during the unbroken thirty-six year period when the party was in office.

This study is an investigation of and report about the Alberta Social Credit Party; it attempts to describe and define the membership, organization, history, and characteristics of the party.

Three over-all approaches were taken:

- 1) Some of the basic scholarship on political parties is discussed and some historical material is included in an attempt to contribute to a broader understanding of the party.

- 2) Based on survey research findings, the study is exploratory: it seeks to answer basic questions about the membership and to develop both demographic and opinion profiles of party members.
- 3) The survey research was designed to test a number of statements about the party and its members; in particular to determine the extent to which the Alberta Social Credit Party is representative of the general Alberta population, and to study the socialization, participation, and activity of the membership.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A thesis such as this requires the active co-operation and participation of many people. To begin with, it required and received the approval and backing of the party, a generous and much appreciated gesture. Former President and now Executive Director of the Alberta Social Credit League, Orvis A. Kennedy, both encouraged and supported the work. Former Premier and Party Leader, and now Senator, Ernest C. Manning, co-operated in allowing the study to be done. Sixty-five constituency Presidents encouraged respondents to participate in the study. Seven hundred and fifteen party members from every constituency in Alberta participated in completing questionnaires. The Alberta Social Credit League supported the research and encouraged the author. Whatever its limitations, the data gathered and presented here is precious.

The Department of Political Science, and especially the Chairman, Professor Grant Davy, encouraged and supported the author during his years as a graduate student. And throughout the many phases of the study, a number of professors from the Department of Political Science assisted and advised. In planning the study, developing the questionnaire, computing and analyzing the data, in the production of the dissertation, many people from within and without the University assisted, and no attempt will be made to mention all of these individually.

The supervisor of this thesis was Dr. F. C. Engelmann. Not only did he assist, advise, and encourage, but he gave freely of his time and valued counsel. He is a scholar, a friend, and an appreciated professor.

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CHAPTER 1

THE ALBERTA SOCIAL CREDIT PARTY MEMBERSHIP STUDY: INTRODUCTION

The political history of the Province of Alberta is to a large degree the history of the Alberta Social Credit Party; for more than half of its existence as a Province of Canada the Social Credit Party was the dominant factor, the decisive influence, in Alberta politics. The second leader of the Party, E. C. Manning, held the office of party leader and Premier for a quarter of a century. The rise of Social Credit as a party also gave rise to one of the largest Canadian social science enterprises sponsored by the Canadian Social Science Research Council.¹ Like the

¹ This enterprise culminated in the publication of, among other works, C. B. Macpherson, Democracy in Alberta (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1953).

J. R. Mallory, Social Credit and the Federal Power (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1954).

J. Irving, The Social Credit Movement in Alberta (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959).

farmers before them, the Social Credit Party built itself on a participatory structure which is "a-typical" of Canadian parties in general, but definitely in the pattern of the West, and of Alberta.

Even after years in office the Alberta Social Credit Party maintained a tradition of participation by the rank and file membership that is unusual for Canadian political parties. The Party itself exhibited unusually strong organizational capabilities, the loyalty of the party members was apparently and obviously enduring; also the commitment of party adherents to the idea of social credit, and the rise of the party, makes it a classic study of a social movement. In spite of the record and history of the Party, no empirical study of membership had ever been carried out until this present effort was undertaken. Since the Party is now out of office, this study will remain the only empirical study of membership ever to be carried out during the unbroken period when the Party was still in office.

This study then is an investigation of and report about the Social Credit Party, its membership, organization, and characteristics as a political party. The broad social base of the party, its organization, and social functions broader than mere campaigning, give rise to three sets of questions. Hence these will be three over-all approaches in the study:

- 1) The first, resulting from a membership survey will be to test a number of statements about the party membership, political participation, views held by the membership, and to test some popularly held views about the Social Credit Party and its members.
- 2) The study will be exploratory; again based on the survey findings, it will seek to answer a number of basic questions about the membership, who they are, what they do, how they became involved in politics and what motivated them to join the Social Credit Party, and their view on selected issues - in sum an empirical picture of the party.

- 3) Finally, in order to see the development of the party and to appreciate the material on the membership, some historical material will be included, and some of the basic scholarship on political parties will be discussed in an attempt to develop a broader understanding of the party.

The organization of supporters outside the parliament - or in this case, outside the Legislature - at a minimum "represents a reservoir of largely voluntary and unpaid labour of the sort which is indispensable in the era of the mass electorate."² Party members do not have the right to control or direct actions of parliamentary leaders, but they do carry out functions crucial for the return of their party to office. In addition to the more obviously political functions such as aggregating and integrating various interests, parties have much broader social functions. This is especially true for the Social Credit Party. The party means more to the typical member than just infrequent

² R. T. McKenzie, British Political Parties (London: William Heinemann, 1955), p. 636.

assistance during campaigns. Both objectively and subjectively the party is something more than what the party is to the typical Conservative or Liberal party member. This is probably most obvious when the member's party activities are related to his religious activities, especially during the early years of the party and for older members. In this sense and because of the structure of the party, the Social Credit Party is closer to an European party than the more loosely structured low activist American party.

The parties can be thus quite autonomous social as well as political subsystems, having a distinctive political subculture far beyond specific programs or ideologies. Many writers on such European parties liken them to religious communities...united by constant closer interaction and identification.³

The Social Credit Party of 1971 no longer fits the above description, but it is crucial to understanding its subsequent development to study the origins of the party which gave it its basic orientation.

3

Peter H. Merkl, Modern Comparative Politics (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970), p. 266.

That parties have functions broader than mere assistance during election campaigns is particularly true of many of the Populist and agrarian radical movements - the Non-Partisan League (elected in North Dakota), the Union League, the Progressive Party, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (elected in Saskatchewan), and the Social Credit Party (elected in Alberta). "Each movement...provided a functional definition of the situation within the cultural framework...."⁴ Lipset argues that within the given framework one could build either a leftist or a rightist ideology. This kind of organization and orientation is usually associated with the left, but perhaps populist better expresses what took place.

With some exceptions, the lack of a long-term program of social change accounted, in part, for the failure of Populism to become a permanent radical protest movement. The farmers struck out at random at the most visible economic evils that affected them.... By focusing on certain transitory evils, the agrarian leaders failed to lay the educational base for a new radical movement...⁵

4

S. M. Lipset, Agrarian Socialism (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1950), p. 123.

5

Lipset, op.cit., p. 9.

Unimpressed with the traditional political parties, anxious to develop movements which could represent their interests, and which would be Western in their orientation, prairie inhabitants have been traditionally prepared to depart from conventional political practices. The Alberta Social Credit Party in this sense is one of those departures if viewed from the national perspective; but, within the historical and sociological context, it is more typical than it is unusual. Moreover, the study is specifically and primarily about the more than seven hundred members of the Alberta Social Credit League who participated in the study. It attempts to describe the membership and develop both a demographic and opinion profile of the membership of the Alberta Social Credit Party. In addition, it attempts to describe and classify the Alberta Social Credit Party as it developed and changed in Alberta.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

Central to the first two approaches, that is, an empirical examination and general exploration about party membership, are the following objectives:

- I To determine the extent to which the Alberta Social Credit Party is representative of the general Alberta electorate;
- II To study the socialization, participation and political activity of the membership; and
- III To examine the opinions of the membership about a variety of issues and concerns. In each of these general areas, hypotheses which have been put forward, either explicitly about participation in general, or implicitly about the Alberta Social Credit Party, will be tested.

I) The Alberta Social Credit Party is representative of the Alberta electorate. To test the statement that the membership of the Alberta Social Credit Party is a fairly representative cross-section of the Alberta electorate, the key demographic characteristics of the membership sample will be presented. These include: geographic location of the respondent, sex, age, occupation, length of residence in Alberta, length of party membership, educational level, other education or training, income, country of birth, ethnic/nationality group, religious

affiliation, marital status and size of family, home ownership, type of accommodation, and home area. Most of these characteristics will be compared to those found among all Albertans, or, in some cases, among the electorate. Is the assertion made by party leaders, that the membership is a microcosm of Alberta society, and therefore representative of the general needs, aspiration, and goals of Albertans, justified? If not, in what ways does the membership as a group differ from the general population in key demographic characteristics? To assist in achieving this general objective, there are a number of popularly held views about the Social Credit Party of Alberta. These include among others, the following statements which will be examined in relation to the findings in the sample:

- 1) The party is composed primarily of fundamentalist Protestants.
- 2) The party is closely associated with religious groups and adherents.
- 3) The Social Credit Party is largely rural based.

4) The Social Credit Party primarily appeals to older people, and lacks support among the young.

5) People most strongly committed to Social Credit are those who were first attracted to it in the 1930's when William Aberhart organized the party.

II) Central to the second over-all approach, an exploratory study of the membership, are the statements of the respondents about their socialization into politics, their participation and political activities, such as holding office, attending conventions, active campaigning in elections, time spent in campaigning, as well as the respondent's primary activity as a member. The member's perception of his socialization will then be discussed in relation to some general findings about party identification. Further opinions about federal political activity, leadership, organization, and comments about the party will be studied.

Numerous studies on political participants have been done and some conclusions arrived at about the characteristics

of those who tend to be active politically. Following are some of these statements, each of which will be tested to see whether or not they can be confirmed for the Social Credit Party sample.⁶ The statements were found to be generally applicable to political participants; the interest here is to see if they hold true for the Social Credit Party.

1) The general fact about participation is that "higher socio-economic status is positively associated with increased likelihood of participation in many political acts; higher socio-economic status persons are more likely to vote, attend meetings, join a party, campaign, and so forth."⁷ This hypothesis which has been tested and found to be upheld in many studies will be tested to see if it holds true for the members of the Alberta Social Credit League.

2) Income is correlated with political participation.⁸

6

These statements are all taken from Lester W. Milbrath, Political Participation (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1965), Chapter V (for each statement, Milbrath refers to supportive studies) and from S.M. Lipset, Agrarian Socialism, op.cit.

7

See research reports supporting this claim as outlined in Milbrath, op.cit., p.17

8

Milbrath, Ibid., p. 120

3) A trend for those with higher education to be more likely to participate in politics has been found in many Western countries.⁹

4) The longer a person resides in a given community, the greater is the likelihood of his participation in politics.¹⁰

5) Farmers are less likely to become active in politics than city dwellers.¹¹

6) Homeowners are more likely to participate than renters.¹²

7) Young people are not likely to become enmeshed in politics until they have become established in a job, with a home, and start to raise a family.¹³

9

Ibid., p. 122.

10

Ibid., p. 133.

11

Ibid., p. 128.

12

Ibid., p. 133.

13

Ibid., p. 133.

8) Participation rises gradually with age, reaches its peak and levels off in the forties, fifties, and gradually declines about sixty.¹⁴

9) The most apathetic groups are the young married citizens who are only marginally integrated into their community. Several studies have found that married persons are more likely to participate in politics than single persons.¹⁵

10) Men are more likely to participate in politics than women.¹⁶

Each of these statements will be examined in relation to the data in the sample. The general dimensions of participation will also be studied. This includes several factors,¹⁷ such as the degree to which individuals participate, the covertness of participation, the motivation

¹⁴ Milbrath, op.cit., p. 134.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 134.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 135.

¹⁷ All of the dimensions of participation which follow are found in Milbrath, op.cit., Chapter 1.

of behaviour, what stimulates the behaviour, whether the political activity is episodic (such as in an election), or continuous (as part of the pattern of living), whether the behaviour is an input (for example, campaigning), or an outtake (some object such as economic opportunity sought after), whether the action is expressive (for example, talking or debating), or instrumental (that is goal oriented, seeking something more than mere participation for its own sake). One final dimension is the amount of social interaction required, whether a little or a great deal. A summary participation profile will be presented following the presentation of the data on this subject.

III) Having compared the demographic characteristics to those of the Alberta electorate, and having tested a number of generally held hypotheses about participation within the Social Credit Party, the study will turn to a presentation of the opinions of the respondents about a number of issues. This section will begin with the respondents'

perceptions about which groups tend to support Social Credit and which groups tend to get more from the Alberta Social Credit Government (since it was the governing party at the time of the study) than they deserve, based on the amount of support they give it. The opinions of the sample about taxes, government spending, government budget, Quebec, the constitution and American investment will be explored. Responses to another set of issues dealing with abortion, capital punishment, Vietnam, C.B.C., divorce laws, day care centres, medical insurance, and immigration to Canada, will also be outlined and compared with a similar set of responses from a general non-party sample.

This cluster of subject areas was selected to give a general idea of the orientation of the sample to social questions and general governmental direction and activities.

The following hypotheses about the membership's opinions will be tested:

- 1) It is expected that perception of problems and priorities given to local, provincial, and national problems will be quite different from those of the general electorate,

since being members of a party, respondents will presumably have a higher interest in politics, a higher degree of over-all participation, and quite possibly, more information about politics.

2) Because of these same factors, it is expected that the members will generally exhibit more liberal attitudes on key social questions than would be found among the general electorate.¹⁸

3) It is expected that the membership will feel that higher income groups and professionals are better treated by the system than lower income groups and farmers.

4) It is expected that the membership will exhibit a positive attitude toward increased government spending and activity.

5) Although the statement below cannot be directly tested because of the lack of clarity of the

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Christian Bay outlines ten different kinds of liberalism in his introduction to The Psychology of Liberalism (unpublished manuscript). It was impossible in the questionnaire to go into the kind of depth necessary to develop this question, as another forty questions would have been necessary. For purposes of this study, the term simply means a general positive orientation toward reform and a concern for the welfare of others as evidenced by support of programs to reach that objective.

terms used, it may be considered here prior to the reading of chapter three which outlines the development of the Social Credit Party during the years to which the following comment ostensibly applies:

...under Aberhart, and more decisively under Ernest C. Manning, who became leader on Aberhart's death in 1943, the Social Credit Party turned sharply to the right...The Social Credit Party became a highly conservative and at times, reactionary party, with little else to distinguish it except its sectionalism... Thus in the far west, free-enterprising orthodoxy and Social Credit emotionalism have combined to bring political success to a de-facto conservatism.¹⁹

The above general comment can be compared with the historical sketch.

The following generally held view will be examined in addition: Many people who support Social Credit provincially support the Progressive Conservatives federally. This split ticket characteristic, which is generally thought to be the tendency among the electorate in general, will be tested to see if it extends to party members as well.

19

Gwendolen Carter, "The Commonwealth Overseas: Variations on a British Theme." in Modern Political Parties, Sigmund Neumann, Editor (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1956), p. 69.

Within each of these general areas of interest - that is, the socialization and participation of members, and the opinions and views of the sample - demographic characteristics, and intra-party opinions and participation differences, will also be investigated wherever fruitful. Differences which exist within the party membership itself will be presented, illustrating differences within the sample according to selected independent variables, such as age, religion, and education, and dependent variables including such things as patterns of participation, federal voting practices, and opinions of some issues.

As for the third general approach, a general study of some basic theoretical and descriptive problems about party structure, organization, and appeal will be raised in this introductory chapter, and in more detail in the chapters to follow. This diversion will provide the framework within which I will turn, in Chapter two, to an analysis of the dimensions of the Alberta Social Credit Party and, in Chapter three to a historical account of the origins and ideology of the party. This will lead up to the original contribution of this

study; Who belongs to the Social Credit Party and why? How important and how extensive are party activities? How deeply felt is the membership? What part in the members' life does membership play? What are the members' views about leadership, party organization, and their likes and dislikes about the party? What role does the party have? The political party is

...the master agency linking society, in terms of politicized demands, and government is the political party...In a real sense then, political parties are the grand connectors of people and the organs of government.²⁰

People who actually hold membership in a political party generally belong to a significant minority - the political stratum. The activities, values, and opinions of these people are important in public affairs to an extent far greater than their numbers might suggest. The political stratum or political class are "those people who occupy themselves with public affairs to an unusual degree, such as government officials, elected office

holders, active party members, publicists, officers of voluntary associations, and opinion leaders."²¹

A study of the activities, the views, and the concerns of this group is vital to understanding and assessing the political system; although a great deal has been written on Social Credit, no study has previously been done of actual party members. Almost all of the material on Social Credit and the Social Credit Party has to do with a history of the events and the details of the style and appeal of the leadership, particularly in its early formative stages.²² Since this specific investigation has not been done before, we can only point for assistance to related research on other aspects of the party, and material about party membership in general.

21

Herbert A. McClosky, "Consensus and Ideology in American Politics" in Readings in Modern Political Analysis, Robert A. Dahl and Deane E. Neubauer, Editors (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968), p. 373.

22

See Michael Sinclair, Reading Reference to Social Credit: A Bibliography (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1963).

Thus the work which has been done on membership will serve as a base on which to examine the current membership of the Social Credit Party. After developing this data base about party members, which we presently do not have, the implications of the membership profile for the party, and for the party system in Alberta, will be discussed. This data base is necessary before empirical theories about party members can be developed.

Within the over-all framework for decision-making, parties exist as one component of one of the subsystems. We may consider that there are at least three major subsystems which together make up the decision-making process,²³ namely:

- 1) the legal framework (laws, customs, the constitution, quasi-mechanical routines),
- 2) the social processes - including interest groups, the bureaucracy and other groups as well as the political parties, governing and opposition, and

23

Based on the summary classifications and typologies found in James A. Robinson and R. Roger Majak, "The Theory of Decision-Making" in Contemporary Political Analysis, James C. Charlesworth, Editor (New York: Free Press, 1967), Chapter 10.

- 3) the organization and structures within which information systems are developed, problems solved, support and research systems developed and so on.

All the above components make up the decision-making system. This study will focus on the characteristics of the political party which is itself only one part of the social system, inter-related to the other parts, influencing the larger social system, and being influenced by it in turn. To do this, it will be necessary to examine some aspects of the work by students of political parties.

1.3 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The problem set in this study posed some difficulty in the gathering of information, and although the method used to gather the data is discussed more fully in Chapter four, a few general comments are appropriate at this point to acquaint the reader with the method used in doing this study.

The size of the sample actually represents a considerable proportion of the total membership; over seven hundred cases are included in most of the tables to be presented. In instances where particular questions were not answered, the sample size in most cases still amounts to several hundred. Of the total membership lists, which unfortunately included many expired and inactive members' names, a random sample of ten percent of the total was drawn. This was done through drawing sixty-five subsamples, one sample for each then existing constituency list. A seven page questionnaire was carefully developed and extensively pre-tested. The primary problem was to limit the

size of the questionnaire. Naturally, there are many questions which would have been helpful and interesting and many tests which would have been of great interest in further studies. Among these are the series of tests mentioned by Robert Lake in Political Ideology,²⁴ the Mach test in Studies in Machiavellianism,²⁵ the Eysenck tests,²⁶ and the previously referred to tests of liberalism.²⁷ But the fundamental decision had to be made about how much could be gathered and what was most important. It was decided that what was most needed at this time was an exploratory study to gather the basic data about membership, their demographic characteristics, their opinions about the party and their role in it, and some comments about some basic social questions.

24

(New York: Free Press, 1967), including political efficacy, the Adorno F-scale test, dominance scale, anomy scale, ego strength, etc.

25

F. Christie and F.L. Geis (New York: Academic Press, 1970).

26

Radicalism-conservatism and tough-tender minded tests in H.J. Eysenck's The Psychology of Politics (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954).

27

The ten measures of liberalism, Christian Bay, op.cit.

Each of these questions can stand alone and be regarded as an indicator and an impression of the orientation of the party sample; or, taken together they should help the reader to assess the direction and strength of the opinions, and the general predisposition of the party membership. To accomplish this, the problem of cutting down the questionnaire size was still a matter of concern; there are limits to the amount of time one can expect to ask of the respondents, particularly when, as in this study, the respondent receives the material by mail and is asked by letter to co-operate in answering and returning the questionnaire.

A total of seven hundred and fifteen completed and usable questionnaires were returned (excluding those which for various reasons were unusable), a number sufficient to provide a reasonably sound basis for discussing the party membership in general, and at the very minimum, of talking about the respondents themselves.

Obviously, only the questions such as those yielding demographic data could be compared with the general electorate.

To determine the general electorate's response to some issues, another sample was drawn from Calgary and Edmonton and a separate questionnaire was developed. Face to face interviews were conducted with this group and the questionnaire included some questions which could be used as a comparison; other questions were asked of this group which are not directly relevant to this study. As an example, as may be noted in Appendix B, this questionnaire included, questions about why the respondent did not vote, since in any general sample, a large percentage of respondents (usually over thirty percent) were non-voters.

This questionnaire also included some items which were drawn from McClosky's rule-of-the-game items, the free speech and opinion items, and items dealing with cynicism toward government and politics in general.²⁸ Where the questions are similar, however, they can be used to differentiate the membership from the Calgary-Edmonton electorate.

The statements made about the membership are as reliable as possible given the parameters, particularly the cost considerations. Through investigation of non-participants in the total

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These items are from Herbert A. McClosky's study of the American electorate, "Consensus and Ideology in American Politics", reprinted in Readings in Modern Political Analysis, Edited by Robert A. Dahl and Deane E. Neubauer (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968), Chapter 21.

sample and by corroborating all of this evidence with extensive personal observation through work in the party, attendance at several hundred meetings over the course of past several years, and travel to virtually every single constituency in the Province, the writer claims that the sample represents a fair and accurate cross-section of the actual membership of the Alberta Social Credit League.

In Chapter two, the Alberta Social Credit Party will be analyzed as to its major characteristics: the organization, membership base, and support basis will be examined in a general theoretical framework of party development. A summary classification will then be presented, with the objective of setting out the general characteristics of the party so that it can be compared with other parties.

Chapter three is designed to set the Alberta Social Credit Party in historical perspective. The development of Alberta politics will be traced through the first three main phases of Alberta politics: the traditions inherited and the parties which contested the first elections after

Alberta became a province in 1905, which we might call the Liberal period (1905-1921); the organization of the dominant economic interest group into a political party and its emergence as a governing party, the United Farmers of Alberta period (1921-1935); and the economic and psychological crisis precipitated by the depression and the emergence and development of another new party, the Social Credit Party, and the Social Credit period (1935-1971). Each of these phases is useful in analyzing political development in Alberta, and each has particular characteristics which much at least be reviewed. The fourth phase of Alberta politics which began in 1971 with the electoral success of the Progressive Conservative Party will not be a part of this study. In Chapter three, the characteristics and changes within the party as outlined theoretically in Chapter two will be seen as they actually unfolded historically.

The next part of this study, Chapter four, will outline the methodology used in gathering the data on the party membership. As has been noted, this consisted of two surveys; one has as its object the gathering of facts about, and opinions

from, a large sample of the membership of the party. The second survey consisted of a smaller general non-party sample of the electorate for purposes of finding key similarities and differences between the general public of Alberta and the membership.

Chapters Five through Seven will include a description and analysis of the data gathered from the membership. In these chapters, the major demographic characteristics of the party will be presented. The socialization of party members will be discussed. Information about party activities, participation, methods of communication, sources of information, and opinions toward general problems as well as some information about the respondents' attitudes to party organization and leadership will be reported. Information about the membership, activities and opinions on other topics and aspects of the party will then be presented. In addition, where applicable, a breakdown within the membership will be presented showing intraparty differences. Key variables and opinions will be presented in tabular form, enabling the reader to gain a

more detailed understanding of the party's composition.

Where they exist, comparisons will be made with statistics available about the general population of Alberta.

The final chapter will restate the various propositions about the Alberta Social Credit League which were to be tested. Summary demographic, participation, and opinion profiles of the membership sample will be put forward, and some general conclusions will be made about the party. Finally, implications for further study will be suggested.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ALBERTA SOCIAL CREDIT LEAGUE AS A POLITICAL PARTY

2.1 THE POLITICAL PARTY: SOME GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

The character, course, structure and strategy of the political party are crucial inputs to the political system. Political parties are the focal point in public affairs in most contemporary democracies. The functioning of parties has been critical for the political and economic development, and for the over-all history of Alberta since it became a province.

Neumann's book on modern parties begins with a defence of the need to study political parties:

More preconceived ideas - most of them essentially negative or naïve evaluations - are spread about these key instruments, political parties, than almost any other institution in politics.¹

Schattschneider too, in defending political parties, writes that not only have parties played a major role as makers of democratic government, but that "...the superiority of party government to government of other forms of political organization is overwhelming."²

Although both Neumann (who argues that the future of the Western world will depend on the kind of parties conceived) and Schattschneider (who argues that modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties), tend to overstate the role of parties, their arguments do serve as good counter-balance to the more typical under-estimation of and sometimes cynicism about the place of the party in the total political system. The party is then deserving of careful study.

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Sigmund Neumann, Editor, Modern Political Parties, in his chapter, "Why Study Political Parties" (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1956), p. 209.

2

E.E. Schattschneider, Party Government (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1958), p. 1.

The term political party is relatively new; it emerged gradually in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, referring to various groupings of individuals whose goal was the capture of office in competition with one or more other parties. Parties, then, are the way in which individuals and groups within the community are organized to seize power. Most parties are organized to attempt and take control of government. The idea of a political party was later expanded to include other groups not in direct competition for control of the government and so came to include organizations with varying goals, for example, parties with specific causes (for example, the single tax), or parties representing one particular interest (for example, the Farmers' parties). Given this approach, the party seeks to influence the behavior of a sufficient part of the electorate to achieve the objective of controlling the government. In the final analysis, a party, according to McDonald, acts upon the minds and feelings of human beings. "Party is meaningful only insofar as it causes people to do certain things. Whatever it is that causes people to act in a certain way in controlling

a perceived unit of the more remote environment is the object of the party's operations."³ Parties compete to control a process "which they did not start and which could go on without them."⁴

This study is primarily concerned with the actual members of a party, but it must be recognized that all kinds of activities may come from individuals who, while not readily identifiable as formal members, nonetheless assist and influence the party. Schlesinger notes that the idea of membership connotes "an unwarranted clarity in boundaries."⁵ Therefore, it will be helpful to examine, at least to some extent, other categories of adherents such as supporters, especially financial supporters, party activists, and most broadly, electoral supporters.⁶

³ Neil A. McDonald, The Study of Political Parties (New York: Random House, 1961), p.88.

⁴ J. A. Schlesinger, "Party Units" in Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, II, David L. Sills, Editor (Macmillan and Free Press, 1968), p.430.

⁵ Schlesinger, op.cit., p.432. This of course is more the case in the American party system than in European or Canadian systems.

⁶ A summary of electoral support is given in Chapter Three.

Not all parties perform the same functions, and the functions they do perform may vary over time and with different circumstances - for example, whether the party is in or out of office, its relationship to the membership, and so on. But every political party is by nature a leader-producing organization, with recruitment and nomination functions being crucial; issue formulation, communication, and technical functions are in many cases secondary. Some fundamental categories of functions performed may be identified:

1. The recruitment and selection of leadership personnel for the various governmental offices.
2. The generation of programs and policies for government.
3. The co-ordination and control of governmental organizations.
4. Societal integration by the satisfaction and reconciliation of group demands or by generating a common belief system or ideology.
5. The social integration of individuals by the mobilization of support and by political socialization.

6. Oppositional counterorganization or subversion.⁷

In his work on parties, Neil McDonald⁸ claims that the party exerts influence in three primary areas: leadership, organization, and as a symbol in men's minds. In an age of mass communication and education, it was concluded that the leadership and symbolic influences tend to increase and the local organization tends to lose strength. The question asked of the sample of party members are designed to determine the respondents' feelings and ideas about these subjects. It will become clear that the findings reported by McDonald are confirmed by the experiences and activities of the membership; although many members were not particularly pleased with the trend, especially with the decrease in activity and influence of the local organization, and the general trend away from the mass base of the party.

⁷ All of these categories are from Peter H. Merkl, Modern Comparative Politics (New York: Holt Rinehart & Winston Inc. 1970), p. 272-273.

⁸ The Study of Political Parties, p. 63.

2.2 DIMENSIONS OF THE SOCIAL CREDIT PARTY

This chapter will be devoted to a general discussion and classification of the Social Credit Party and the delineation of key party characteristics. The relationship between party members and other categories of party adherents will also be explored and an introduction to the support base of the Social Credit Party will be made.

In this section, the basic dimensions of the Alberta Social Credit Party will be discussed. The five dimensions put forward by Engelmann and Schwartz⁹ will be utilized as the basis for this section. These dimensions are: party origin, breadth of support, organization and leadership of the party, the focus of appeal, and the relation of the party to government. These dimensions will be described briefly prior to applying them to the Alberta Social Credit Party.

Origin refers to the fundamental distinction between parties which developed within a Parliament and those which historically originated either when the electorate expanded

⁹ F. C. Engelmann and M. A. Schwartz, Political Parties and the Canadian Social Structure (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1967).

at the time of the rise of parliamentary institutions or when a party arose from a particular interest or ideology.¹⁰ The unusual and almost abstruse circumstances which enabled the Social Credit Party to come into existence deserve special consideration. Breadth of support refers to a party's social base, whether restricted to a particular segment or segments of the population, or drawn from a broad social base. Party organization, which will be emphasized in this chapter, refers to the basic approach of the party qua organization, the degree to which the party is oriented to electoral activity through its structure, and the role of the individual party member. A further dimension, focus of appeal, categorizes parties according to the degree to which the party is oriented toward electoral success (on the basis of expediency interests) as against the firm ideological commitments of the party (the faith movement). The final dimension deals with the differences between parties with governmental experience and

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Ibid, p.4. The description of these five dimensions is summarized from chapter 1.

those without; the experience of government generally alters the structure of the party.

"Canada is", Engelmann and Schwartz note, "... one of the few countries whose major parties can be said to have parliamentary origins."¹¹ All subsequent parties, including the Social Credit Party, have been extra-governmental. The fact that immediately after its organization, the Alberta Social Credit Party formed the government, and the unusual longevity of its tenure following the initial success (1935 - 1971), meant that the party developed a rare relationship between party and government, an unusual closeness of identification. Now that, for the first time since its inception, the party is not in office, it may be expected to undergo changes both in structure and personnel. Without the government as a kind of permanent base for the party, it will be forced to redevelop internally or face disintegration.

Engelmann and Schwartz view the political party as one interrelated part of the broader social system.

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Engelmann and Schwartz, op.cit., p. 241.

"Hence we presume that in their origins, organizational structure, and functioning, parties will be affected by the social setting in which they are found. In turn, parties can be expected to have an effect on their social setting."¹² The Alberta Social Credit Party is in many ways an ideal case study of this inter-relationship, and the origins and subsequent developments within the party illustrate this. The five dimensions outlined are interdependent, and as different dimensions change (such as organization or focus of appeal) so the nature of the party changes over time.

The Social Credit Party began as a non-political mass movement. It was completely extra-governmental, based on an educational and social protest movement which had strong connections with, and was in fact organized through, the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute. It very quickly became an office-seeking organization however, as the leader, William Aberhart, tested political climate through a series of public opinion polls (he called them

¹²Engelmann and Schwartz, op.cit., p.14.

straw votes) which indicated strong support and promise of electoral backing from a majority of Albertans. The base of support in the party is broad. The party's stated objective is to represent all Albertans, and therefore to recruit from as wide a grouping as possible. It is not completely open, however, and there have been many cases of rejected membership applications, and ousters from the party. But although broadly based, and organized to seek support from all groups, the party nonetheless performs its aggregating function, or at least publicly claims to do so, in terms of overriding party principles. But generalized support in all its many forms comes to any party with a good chance at office.

The following four tables will provide a general idea of the areas of relatively strong and weak areas of electoral support as indicated in the 1950's by an Alberta-wide opinion poll.¹³

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An Opinion Survey of Alberta Province, December 1956. Unpublished opinion poll of the A.S.C.L., based on 1,005 interviews in Alberta.

TABLE II - 1
AGE AND SOCIAL CREDIT VOTE

Party respondent voted for in last election			
	Social Credit	Opposition	Don't Vote/Don't Recall
Under 30 years of age	37%	22%	41%
30 years and over	51%	27%	22%

Although this table also says something about the age of general participation in elections, it also indicated a stronger Social Credit vote among those over thirty than for those under thirty.

TABLE II - 2¹⁴
RESIDENCE AND SOCIAL CREDIT VOTE

Length of residence in Province			
	Social Credit	Opposition	Don't Vote/Don't Recall
Under 10 Years	29%	27%	44%
10 years and over	51%	27%	22%

This table indicates the general tendency for long time residents to support Social Credit electorally, and also indicates less participation by new-comers in the electoral process.

TABLE II - 3¹⁵
SEX AND SOCIAL CREDIT VOTE

Participation			
	Social Credit	Opposition	Don't Vote/Don't Recall
Male	51%	26%	23%
Female	47%	26%	27%

Men participated in the election to a slightly greater extent than women and also tended to support Social Credit given this increased participation.

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Public Opinion Survey, op.cit.

TABLE II - 4¹⁶

OCCUPATION AND SOCIAL CREDIT VOTE

Strength of Party			
	Social Credit Opposition Don't Vote/Don't Recall		
Business owner and Professional	42%	37%	21%
Other white collar	45%	29%	26%
Skilled labour	50%	15%	36%
Semi-skilled, industrial	52%	19%	29%
Farmer	51%	30%	19%
Miscellaneous	49%	26%	25%
Retired, Spinsters, Widows	51%	32%	17%

The most important aspect of this table is not the differences between various groups, but the strength of and broad based support of the party. All groups at that time, tended to give strong support to the party; in no group did the opposition exceed the supporters of the party. The main differences in the above table is the fact that farmers and workers as a group give support in the greatest proportion of their number, and business owners and professional people give the least support. This

serves only as a rough guide to Social Credit electoral support in the 1950's but it serves as useful background to working towards finding out about Social Credit party membership. Membership has been on a mass basis, although in the 1935 and 1940 elections, the actual selection of candidates was done through a vigorous and tightly controlled mechanism developed by the leader and his advisory committee. The requirements include the payment of a nominal annual fee and signing of an application form agreeing to support the party and affirming allegiance to the principles of the party.

Duverger suggests three forms of organization, and a party may be organized as one of, or a combination of, more than one of the following three:¹⁷ the cadre form, based on elector units and selection of key workers; the mass party, based on dues-paying membership who presumably have a basic ideological commitment; or the devotee party, a third more vague category which is more open than the cadre (although the cadre party may pretend to open its ranks to the masses if convenient for electoral purposes), but which is more closed than the mass party.

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Classifications from Maurice Duverger, Political Parties (Toronto: Methuen Publications, 1954), p.67.

The Social Credit Party began as a mass party, although certain elements such as the closed candidate selection by the party leader, gave it some characteristics of a devotee party. With the opening of nominations to the membership it moved more toward a mass type party, and then it never quite lost its basic mass characteristics, certainly not in image and symbol.

Duverger explains the historical development of the idea of party membership. "The concept of membership is a result of the evolution from the cadre party to the mass party."¹⁸ The extension of suffrage to the masses has resulted in the development of mass parties providing opportunities for political participation not previously available. There is a further interesting developmental distinction: Duverger claims that cadre and mass parties generally correspond with the traditional Right and Left distinction.¹⁹ If this is indeed the case, then the change

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Duverger, op.cit., p.63 .

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Ibid., p.67 .

from mass to cadre which apparently occurred within the Social Credit Party may have represented a corresponding directional change from Left to Right.

The party began as a mass movement (with the exceptions of leader control as noted), but once in office, the office-holders gradually moved it in the direction of a cadre party. The membership became less and less relevant to either policy making or even control over the election process, as the office-holders could claim greater authority and legitimacy than the membership, since they could ostensibly speak for the whole population rather than just the party. This is a tendency found in most parties which form a government. It may be seen as a general characteristic exhibited by parties who have this relationship to government.

Turning now to the actual organization of the party, the formal structure itself consists of a local organization for each constituency, most of which have become cadre organizations mobilizing themselves only for elections, and a provincial board of directors which includes the president and the leader, both of whom must be elected by the

Convention. The President must be elected annually; the Leader's position must be affirmed annually. A failure of affirmation would automatically result in a leadership convention. The Convention is the annual meeting where representatives from each constituency (with limits on the number who may attend from each constituency) assemble for elections, resolutions, and general party business. But like any other party, the formal leadership and individual personalities holding those positions are the primary factors in decision making. And what is just as important as the formal structure of the organization are the unwritten practices, the habits, tendencies and circumstances of the party, all of which help to determine many of the decisions.

The focus of appeal of the party under study features an interesting combination of original orientation to principles, policies and ideology, and an aggregating approach to electoral success. There is little doubt that the Social Credit Party began as a party of principle and moved toward the other end of the scale. The original appeal

to Albertans offered a specific program for economic reform, but the party also had a strong and lasting psychological appeal. But the role of principle and ideology may be felt long after the specifics of it are relevant. The doctrine may even be fictitious, or accidental, or rest on an historical tradition not relevant to problems facing the contemporary party.²⁰ It would seem that such was the case to a certain degree within the Social Credit Party; ideological discussions about the implementation of Social Credit continued to provide conflict long after it was relevant to the actual behavior of the party or the government, or even to problems and options which the party had to face electorally.

Finally, the lengthy uninterrupted time in office meant that the party had a special relationship to the provincial government. It became a pragmatic, interest-

²⁰From Foreword by D. W. Brogan in Political Parties, op.cit., p.v.

aggregating party, acting as broker once in office and attempting to satisfy as many interest groups as possible. The office-holders (as distinct from the membership) probably eventually viewed the party itself as just one more interest group with suggestions and resolutions to be considered along with all the others. This, of course, applies only to the provincial government, and not to federal activities since federally only"....Conservative and Liberals had the kind of experience a party gains by governing ... The distinction between them and third parties is mitigated only by the fact that third parties have governed provinces."²¹

It will be seen in Chapter Three that the party began as a mass party, a tight, well-administered organization which encouraged and received extensive involvement of the membership, an involvement which went beyond mere card-holding, and had social and educational as well as political implications. This tradition remained especially strong in some areas of the province, but in general, and particularly

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Engelmann and Schwartz, op.cit., p.246.

so in the cities, the party gradually became a cadre party with the organization supplying and offering fewer and fewer activities and services, developing in a way more characteristic of traditional Canadian parties. Social events became rarer, educational activities and the production of pamphlets and articles and the sponsoring of seminars and speakers gradually stopped. The cadre type of organization became highly electoral in orientation, in many cases holding only annual meetings when there was no electoral activity, as contrasted to the former frequent and regular meetings and activities.

As change took place within the party, the total social organization of the province was changing. The degree of specialization within the economy and the overall diversity of interests within society resulted in the formation and increase in activity of numerous interest groups. The United Farmers of Alberta had acted both as interest group and party, and could represent, in their time, the vast majority of Alberta residents - the farmers. But after the 1920's, as farmers became a less important factor,

at least numerically they had to concentrate on maintaining their own interest group, as other groups were forming along occupation, professional and business lines to compete for influence on government policy, often by-passing the party system completely, and taking concerns directly to the Executive Council, the policy-making body.

The increase in size and professionalization of the civil service also created a new input to decision-making. This development provided the impetus for much of the orientation of government activity, again making the party less important in the total political process. Rather than define policy, party membership and their convention resolutions became just one, instead of the, factor, and together these factors contributed to a decline in importance of the party. In a way, however, the party membership really never did formulate policy. Even at its inception, the party's mass membership formed more of a cheering section for the leaders to expound the idea of social credit, and less of an agency for the creation of policy.

2.3 PARTY ORGANIZATION AND THE MEMBERSHIP

In his discussion on the political party as an organizational system, Eldersveld utilizes three approaches: the party as a task group, the party as an information network, and the party as a decisional system.²² Most party office holders interviewed by Eldersveld were dedicated to developing an efficient political organization and were often critical of their own as well as other workers' efforts. This was found to be the case in analyzing the comments of the party sample: there was a strong desire to improve organization and increase available information.

In viewing the party as an information network, the communication style and information flow are necessary to the maintenance of the party as a viable subsystem of action.²³ However imperfect the information flow and communication system may be, it contributes to "minimal

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Samuel J. Eldersveld, Political Parties: A Behavioral Analysis (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., 1964), Chapters 13, 14 and 15.

23

Ibid., p. 357.

stability, organizational adaptation, awareness, loyalty, and aspirations which a party needs if it is to survive."²⁴ Questions concerning the information flow from and to party members and general comments about the working of the party, and improvements the respondents would like to see, indicate a deep concern with this aspect of the party; in fact, the educational and informational aspects of the party are of over-riding concern to many party members.

Finally, there is the party as decisional system working to achieve group goals. The little decisions made at the base, but cumulative in effect and impact "may be as important as the 'grand' decisions of the upper elite."²⁵ Within the Social Credit Party, there is a plurality of decision-making centers. They are geographically dispersed and ideologically diffuse. Hence, decision-makers have to take into account a fairly large group if support mobilization is to be maximized. This is a complex social process. Students who glance at a party and conclude that all the decisions are made by the leader or a small group, as was supposed to be the case with Social Credit Party leaders

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Eldersveld, op.cit., p.378.

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Ibid., p.380.

Aberhart and Manning, are ignoring this factor. The many decisions, including doctrinal, morale-building, candidate selection, financial, and technical decisions, all crucial to the total fortunes of a party, are a result of many interacting decisions made by a fairly large number of people.

But what are the usual incentives that encourage the individual citizen to participate in the work and the organization of the party? Incentives to participate in the party organization may include at least these three types: it may be the obvious, an expectation of material reward; or the incentive may be for solidary or status objectives; or thirdly, the participation may be purposive, outside the individual's self-interest, such as an interest in policy, program, or ideology.²⁶ Simple organizations use predominantly one; most democratic governing parties, including the Social Credit Party when it was governing, use all three.

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From a classification proposed by Joseph A. Schlesinger, "Political Party Organization", Handbook of Organizations, James G. March, Editor (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., 1965), p. 770.

Schlesinger notes that successful parties often avoid policy-oriented participants and establish procedures and structures to channel such participants into another organization, established solely but not necessarily explicitly for that purpose. Again, this is exactly what occurred within the early Social Credit Party as will be seen in chapter three. The basic unit of the party, however, according to Schlesinger, remains the candidate organization. It is here that many participants other than party members have an input, including newspapers, interest groups, financial backers and other supporters.

2.4 CAREERS: OFFICE-HOLDERS AND MEMBERS

The state and nature of party organization is related to the ambition tensions among the office-seekers, or in this case, at the time the study was carried out, the office-holders. If we allow that there are office-holders who want to attain or retain office, the organizational tension will be considerable. In other situations

office-holders don't want to be re-elected because they plan to retire or leave elected office voluntarily. This for example, was the case with a very large number of Social Credit M.L.A.'s and cabinet ministers in the 1971 election. This resulted in weak organizational tension. But where the ambition is progressive, that is, where office-seekers are preparing for at least one office higher, the impulse for organization will be greatest.²⁷ The Social Credit Party began as a progressive organization, in the sense just described, and intended to seek election not only in Alberta, but also to contest federal elections. The organization eventually turned static, wanting only to retain existing offices; and finally, large and important segments of the party became discrete in their ambitions, as witness the retirements beginning in 1968 and continuing to a time immediately prior to the 1971 election.

When a party is in office, the organized membership

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Schlesinger, op.cit., proposes classification of office-seekers as static, discrete, or progressive, p.768.

generally experiences difficulty in making a policy claim. This becomes acute in the case of the Social Credit Party when the party remains in office for a lengthy period without experience outside of the legislature. The office-holding leadership is looking at the general electorate, while the membership, particularly in a party which is ideological or program-oriented, wishes to exert influence on government policy. To avoid difficulty in such a potential conflict situation, it is often in the interests of the office holding leadership to cultivate a docile organization.²⁸ Non-dues-paying voters are unorganized and inarticulate on policy but party members generally want to participate in such activities. The two loci for influence in the party then are:

- 1) The public office-holder with a concern for the electorate, and
- 2) The general membership has a claim to influence party policy and direction. There is often a desire to participate in the policy-making by the mass membership, but the general result in most parties, including Social Credit, is the domination of the membership by the office-holders, who must tailor policies to the electorate.²⁹

²⁸ Leon D. Epstein, Political Parties in Western Democracies (New York: F. A. Praeger, 1967), p. 297.

²⁹ Epstein, op.cit., p. 305.

Although the role of the party has changed in relation to other factors in the political system, it nevertheless retains its basic and crucial functions of candidate selection, electoral campaigning, presentation of alternate leadership and platform, and to a large extent mobilizing general citizen participation in the electoral process. These functions are determined mainly by the party membership.

2.5. PARTY MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

The general characteristics of and some special problems about party membership will be discussed in this section. Membership, as defined by Valen and Katz, "... is used to refer to a person who is registered by the party as a member and who pays his regular membership dues. Only people who meet these requirements are permitted to participate in the decision making processes within the party."³⁰

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Henry Valen and Daniel Katz, Political Parties in Norway (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1964), p. 68.

A brief summary of the attitude to membership by three Canadian parties is provided by Engelmann and Schwartz:

The New Democratic Party has members because it follows the originally socialist tradition of involving the maximum number of individuals in day-to-day identification with the movement, and because memberships are an important source of finances. The number of members is important in establishing the amount of influence constituency associations are to have in the provincial party. In the provincial Liberal and Conservative parties, the object is simply to conduct a campaign in all constituencies, and to have constituencies represented in the party's councils....However, there is nothing about the Liberal and Conservative parties, as presently constituted, that provides a regularized base of influence for these private members.³¹

Clearly the Social Credit Party is closer to the New Democratic Party other than to other parties in its notion of membership.

Parties in Canada are generally reluctant to publish or discuss actual membership figures. When these are mentioned they are often open to question because of the methods used in the calculation, or the motivations of the officials. Certainly membership tends to rise and fall with the electoral

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Engelmann and Schwartz, op.cit., p.147.

cycle, two years of inflation around election time followed by two years of stabilization.³² This distinction between stable and unstable members is a useful one, since in this study the primary interest is in the stable, the regular member, not the member who joins once, perhaps for one nomination, and then is gone. Naturally parties are guarded about their membership statistics; part of any election is made up of images about the party which the party develops in hopes of influencing the voter. Even more importantly, most parties want at least to appear to be mass parties, open to all, and so tend to inflate the actual degree of participation. Thus it is generally difficult to compare membership figures.

Duverger notes:

Further fundamental research ought to be undertaken in this field: it is at present rendered difficult by the lack of precision

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Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties*, op.cit., p.85. According to Duverger, this is a trend generally found in European parties; it certainly is true for the Alberta Social Credit Party as confirmed by party officials.

in the statistics. At the least we need to know the composition of membership by age, and by sex, by social categories, by geographical distribution.³³

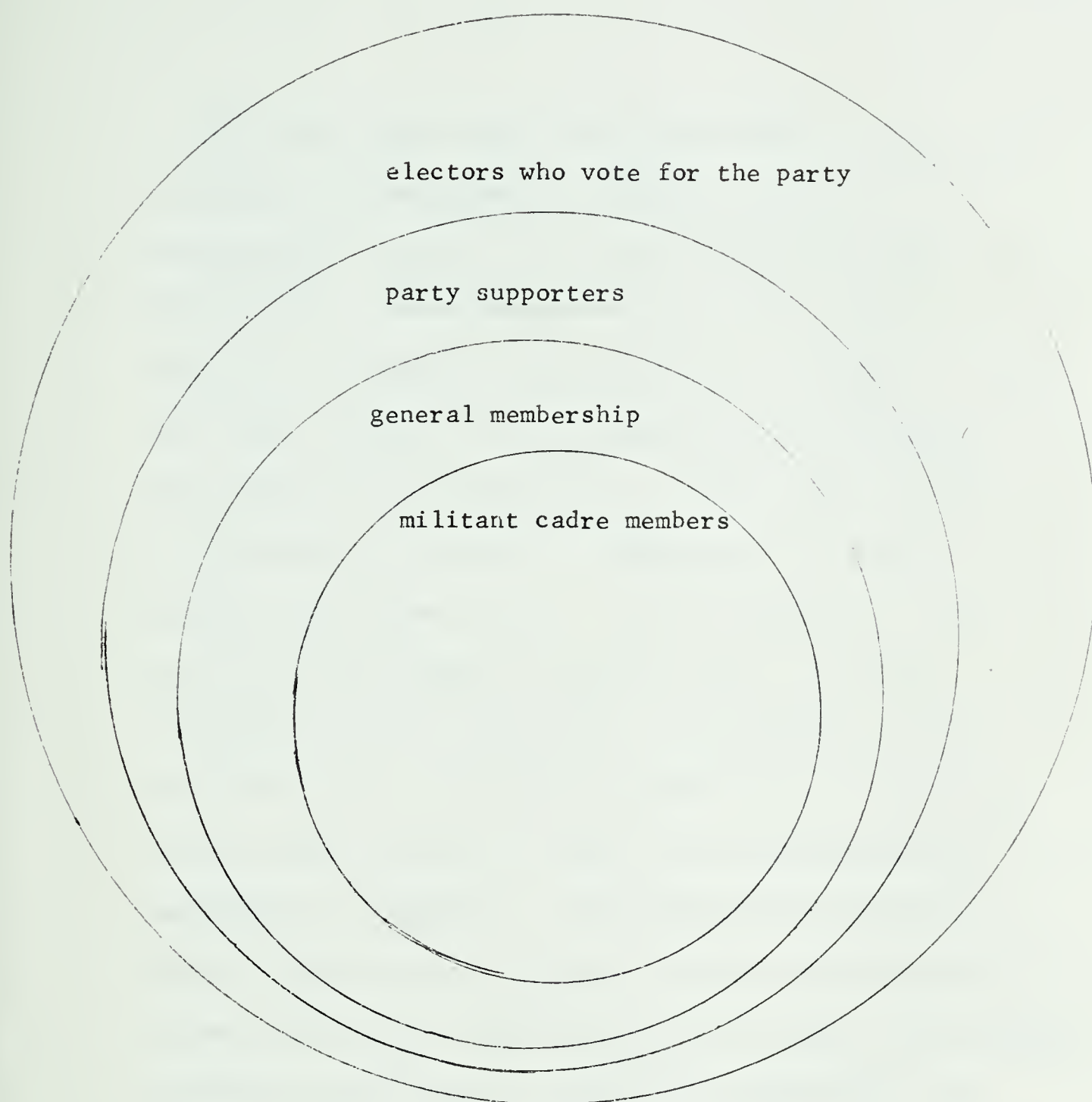
This research will contribute to an understanding of membership. The member plays an important role, but there are a number of other degrees of participation which need to be mentioned. All of these together make up the total support and eventual electoral sources of a party. If we think of the membership as divided between the active office-seekers and holders and their activities, and the general membership, we already have two distinct groupings. The general supporters form another group; finally the electors who vote for the party form another, a looser and large group. To sum up Duverger's classifications, we may view party participants graphically as:³⁴

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Duverger, op.cit., p. 89.

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The graph was prepared by summarizing Duverger, op.cit., p. 90.



The largest group, the electors, are easily measurable. But their participation and activity in general is minimal. The graphs at the end of chapter three present the figures for the voters, the largest single group of participants.

The total Social Credit vote has steadily increased from approximately 168,000 in 1952, to approximately 262,000 in 1971 (about 222,000 for the 1967 election, the election previous to this study). Then too, although the total population of Alberta has risen steadily, the total membership has decreased both absolutely and relatively, and never again reached its 1936 total of 32,000.³⁵ Membership has therefore gradually decreased over all. But it continued to rise and fall in the general electoral pattern. The party apparently gained in supporters and definitely in electors, but lost in actual party members, part of the trend in the shift from mass to cadre, and toward professional management of campaigns. Finally given these patterns, there is apparently an increase in support from voters in those constituencies where membership is higher than average. Of course other factors - candidates, organization, and local conditions - also must be considered in an analysis.

There would seem to be relative independence, as Duverger suggests, between members and the wider electorate.

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Alberta Social Credit League Annual Report, 1937.

The Social Credit Party of Alberta follows the same pattern found by Duverger in European countries, namely, that as the number of voters increases, the total membership decreases. Given the communication and information problems mentioned by party members, there is, it would appear, a lack of interaction between very active party members (those in the inner circle of the graph) and the outside electorate (those in the outer circle). Some party activists may well work outside the group and come into wide contact with other categories but there is a tendency for party workers to work together and so lose touch with supporters and voters.

The relationship between these various groups is both complex and difficult. If we move from a consideration of the broader categories of electors and general supporters to the actual party membership, it may be observed that the party itself is a polity, a miniature political system.

The political party is a social group...It consists of a set of individuals populating specific roles and behaving as member-actors of a boundaried and identifiable social unit...³⁶

³⁶ S. J. Eldersveld, Political Parties: A Behavioral Analysis (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., 1964), p. 1.

All participate to a different degree, and functions are differentiated. Although the Social Credit Party is clearly restricted to political and some education and social activities, there are the three types of membership links which Duverger identifies within the membership. They are perhaps not as clearly defined as those found in many European parties.

The three types identified include first, the community members, most office-holders and office-seekers, who view the party as a community, and who seek natural total involvement; second, the order members, who have a total commitment and enthusiasm for the party, such as party organizers; and third, the associational members, who are the regular rank and file members who may identify strongly and have a longstanding commitment, but do not spend a great deal of their time in party activities.

Whether an individual is an associational, order, or community member is really a matter of the degree and extent of involvement on the part of the member. There are very few participants who would fall into the order category, although in its organizational stages, both the leader and many followers had a total commitment to the movement. Then too the effect of family and community in making party membership a part of the life of many people

was evident in the movement especially during its first few campaigns, a characteristic which lasted for many years in many constituencies. But the primary category of membership was and remains the associational participant, a member who became involved to identify with and offer various kinds of support to the party.

CHAPTER THREE

PARTY POLITICS IN ALBERTA 1905 - 1969:

THE SOCIAL CREDIT PARTY IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

3.1 THE LIBERALS AND THE UNITED FARMERS OF ALBERTA

In order to appreciate the present appeal and state of the Social Credit Party, this chapter will be devoted to an understanding of the origins of the party, its leadership, and, in particular, the ideology of the party and its application as evidenced in legislation. Changing content and application of the ideology , as the party achieved and continued to achieve electoral success, will be discussed.

Many of the dominant themes and traditions of the party had their roots in the early history of the province, and the circumstances which led up to electoral success are important to understanding subsequent developments. Therefore, the chapter will begin with an historical sketch of

events and personalities of Alberta politics from its inception as a Province. The account will be developed up to the end of the Manning years, concluding with summary graphs of voting trends from 1952 to 1967. The survey of party membership was carried out during the final Manning year, and the 1971 election is not part of this study.

In addressing himself to the tradition of one-partyism in Canada, D.V. Smiley has noted that "if there is a normal pattern of development it is for a party to come into power on a wave of public disgust with its predecessors and to be sustained with substantial majorities for three or four elections."¹ Certainly one-party dominance over a long period of time has been the trend to date in Alberta. Each of these periods has provided the basis for a new development in Alberta's political history.

The 1971 general election ended the third phase of Alberta's political history. The Liberal Party ruled from 1905-1921, the United Farmers of Alberta from 1921-1935,

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D. V. Smiley, "One Partyism and Canadian Democracy," Canadian Forum, July, 1958, 38: p. 79.

and Social Credit from 1935-1971. In this first section I intend to examine each of the three phases in order to indicate the over-all development.

The Liberal Period

Settlement of Alberta began in the late 1800's, and extensive immigration was characteristic of the early 1900's. Administration of the Territories had been essentially of a non-party nature. The Executive Council had no single party to which all members owed allegiance; in fact, most Councils had Conservative and Independent members. When Alberta became a province in 1905, there were many who wanted to maintain this essentially non-party administrative approach to government. But the majority of contenders and participants wanted to conduct political activities along traditional Canadian party lines. This was especially desired by Federal Liberals, including Prime Minister Laurier and local Federal Liberals, who saw that they had a good opportunity to establish a solid base in the new government. A. C. Rutherford became the Liberal leader and R. B. Bennett was chosen as Conservative leader.

Party interest affected both the choice of capital

-- Liberal-leaning Edmonton was chosen rather than the Conservative stronghold of Calgary,² -- and the weighting of the vote in the northern regions against the south. The groundwork was being completed for Alberta to follow the normal conventional pattern of Canadian politics as established by eastern parties.

With a Liberal government in power in Ottawa, an all-Liberal Council was named until elections could be held a few months later. This quite naturally gave the Liberals a good start, including all of the advantages of an incumbent, but none of the disadvantages. The Liberals began the campaign by accusing the Conservatives of being subservient to big business and eastern interests, particularly the Canadian Pacific Railway, for whom some of the Conservatives acted as solicitors. "The basis, more emotional than intellectual, for the Conservative outlook ceased to exist; to the progressive newcomer, the Conservative Party was vulnerable to attack as the party of privilege and big

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L. G. Thomas, The Liberal Party in Alberta (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959), p.20.

business, high tariffs and of restriction on settlement."³

The control of the administration by the Liberals, their solid organization and control, their effective attack on the opposition, and the appeal of their progressive platform, combined to elect twenty-three Liberals, leaving the opposition with two seats. Even at this early date, future problems, such as the need for extensive outside capital, distrust of outside and mainly eastern control, and external control of finance, were making themselves evident.

Although one of the first acts of the government was to take over all telephone companies - it was the first provincial government to do so - the Liberals did not favor public ownership of proposed new railroad lines. The Conservatives maintained that all proposed railroad construction should be government owned. Both parties agreed that more lines were needed and a policy for increasing lines was announced by the government just prior to the 1909 election. The Liberals again won a clear majority.

3

Ibid., p. 32.

The Alberta Great Waterways railroad contract and government financial management of the project split the Liberal Party. Thomas holds that this incident was "the pivotal fact"⁴ in Alberta politics, "it so shook both the party organization and the popular conscience of the province that political behaviour was to diverge even further from the conventional path."⁵ Although it seems unlikely that the Ministers involved were dishonest, the terms, conditions, and general management was at the least careless, and Alberta's first Premier had to resign, to be followed by A. L. Sifton.

By the 1913 election, the Conservatives were increasing in strength (winning seventeen out of thirty-seven seats) but they could not overtake the solid lead the Liberals had established in the 1905 election. By this time Alberta's main farm organization, the United Farmers of Alberta, had developed a strong and articulate organization to protect and enhance the interests of the farmers. The organization was

⁴ L. G. Thomas, The Liberal Party in Alberta, op.cit., p.95.

⁵ Ibid., p.95.

particularly fortunate in having deeply committed, articulate and thoughtful leaders. They had a strong organization, with good leadership. The United Farmers of Alberta rejected any proposal to field candidates, preferring to act as an interest group. They were nevertheless becoming disenchanted with the two contending parties, feeling that neither one was adequately representing the interests and concerns of the farmers.

Premier Sifton managed to take the Liberals through the 1917 election with thirty-four seats as against nineteen for the Conservatives. He then resigned and Charles Stewart became the new Liberal Premier.

With the growing disenchantment with the Liberal government, the United Farmers of Alberta membership was becoming anxious to actually field candidates in the forthcoming election. The President, Henry Wise Wood, believed that only by co-operative group action, organized to represent particular economic interests, could reforms be realized.⁶ Wood believed that each interest group defending its particular interest, should represent and

⁶ For a summary of Wood's group approach to politics, see W. K. Rolph, Henry Wise Wood of Alberta (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950).

work for its class, a theory of group government. Wood argued that "the uniform failures of agrarian parties in the United States and Eastern Canada, and the resulting disintegration of the farm organizations involved"⁷ should serve as a warning to the farmers to stay out of direct action, and work toward the organization's dual objective of developing agriculture as an industry and developing the individual farmer through his United Farmers of Alberta Local.

The United Farmers Period

By 1919, the United Farmers of Ontario had moved from their position as an interest group and had become a political party.^{7a} They were successful and won the Ontario election. At a subsequent Alberta annual convention the decision was made to follow the Ontario example, and the United Farmers of Alberta Locals began organizing for the next election. Premier Stewart, a farmer himself, and dependent upon farm support for his position, was amazed. "All my politics have been toward giving the farmers a square deal."⁸

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H. J. Schultz, W. Aberhart and the Social Credit Party, unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Duke, 1959.

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Although the farmers' movement did not become a political force (in the sense of attempting to take control of the government) until 1919-1920 it should be remembered that agrarian radicalism and revolt began long before the United Farmers of Alberta electoral success in 1921 and the corresponding federal success of the Progressive party. Revolts took place in the West as early as 1816, and again in 1870 and the more familiar 1885 revolt as well as in 1921 and 1935. For an understanding of the historical context, contributing factors, and historical roots of these attempts to remove the perceived dominance of an outside power the reader is referred to W.L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950).

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Quoted in Schultz, op.cit., p. 58.

Although the governing party was now in imminent danger from the United Farmers of Alberta, who easily won their first contest in a by-election in Cochrane, and a decisive victory in the June, 1921 federal by-election in Medicine Hat, the situation "failed to stimulate the Liberals into either a vigorous forward policy or a domestic house-cleaning."⁹ Stewart held off the traditional June vote for a month in the hope that the United Farmers might have reached their peak, but the farmers were united and swept thirty-nine seats, leaving the Liberals only fourteen, and disintegrating the Conservative opposition.¹⁰ The United Farmers of Alberta had run with no formal leader (Wood was determined to remain within the farm organization and did not want to hold public office), with only a very informal and general platform, and they had made no violent attacks on the Liberal administration. Herbert Greenfield was elected as United Farmers of Alberta leader and became Premier.

The United Farmers wanted to do away with what they termed old line partisan politicians and thought the best way to do this was to ensure as much local autonomy as possible.

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Thomas, op.cit., p. 201.

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Alberta's first premier, Rutherford, supported the Conservatives in the 1921 election.

They had a strong organization, offered numerous educational programs, and organized and conducted business in a way very similar to the Aberhart efforts a decade later.

Greenfield was not performing completely to the satisfaction of the members of the assembly, and he quietly stepped down in 1925 to make way for J. E. Brownlee, an able, efficient administrator who won the 1926 election. By this time, the question of eastern banking monopolies was being raised again. A resolution calling for a provincial bank was passed, and many United Farmers of Alberta Locals were studying monetary reform as a part of their educational programs. The early works of C. H. Douglas were being studied by many Locals, and the official United Farmers of Alberta newspaper carried stories and accounts about the possibility of economic progress through monetary reform.

The United Farmers of Alberta was re-elected in 1930, although by this time, the economic situation was beginning to deteriorate.¹¹ Then the President, Henry Wise Wood,

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Although the effect was several years away, it was in 1930 that the transfer of natural resources to the Province from the Federal Government took place.

guiding light of the United Farmers of Alberta, retired in 1931. Although he had declined political leadership, he had done a great deal of the work of making the United Farmers of Alberta a viable and strong organization, and had personally become very popular, attracting loyal supporters.

With the leading United Farmers of Alberta theorist retired, many locals actively studying social credit and related monetary reform schemes, and the decline of the economy continuing as the depression became more severe, circumstances became such that a wholly new approach was wanted by much of the electorate. Then, too, there were problems within the administration of the United Farmers. Premier Brownlee lost a critical law suit, having been charged with the seduction of his eighteen year old secretary. She and her father sued Brownlee for \$10,000.00 damages, and eventually won the case. Brownlee resigned and later appealed the case all the way to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, but with no success. On July 10th, Richard Reid took over as Premier.

This unfortunate successor, R. G. Reid, lacked any outstanding leadership qualities which might have led to a

renaissance within the group, but probably nothing could have saved the United Farmers by this time. Then too, he took over just when the Social Credit movement was getting organized and William Aberhart was planning his attack. Eventually the whole electoral base of the United Farmers would be attracted to the new movement.

The United Farmers were aware of the threat which William Aberhart and his social credit theories posed to the Government. They therefore set up a committee of the Legislature to study and report on the possibilities of adopting a social credit plan to solve the province's economic problems. The establishment of the 1934 Committee was a highly significant event. It was important to Aberhart's future and the role of the social credit theory. There are, however, a number of other factors leading up to that event and the subsequent election of a Social Credit Government which require elaboration.

From the end of the First World War, the western rural electorate was in disagreement with the Liberal wheat policy which allowed open competition in selling wheat. But the Conservatives were no alternative since they were then known as the party of high tariffs, a policy traditionally

repugnant to prairie producers. As a result, the two traditional parties in Canada were becoming less and less acceptable to the electorate. "The West, in general, viewed the Federal Government's national policy as a means for developing the financial and manufacturing institutions of Eastern Canada at the expense of the western hinterland."¹² Federally, this Western response was manifested in the rise of the Progressives; provincially, as had been noted, the electoral success of the United Farmers saw the downfall of both Liberals and Conservatives in 1921. As Lipset observed, the Progressive Party arose to meet special demands, as did Social Credit and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation.¹³

Macpherson noting the unusual stability of Alberta governments and the unusually infrequent change of government, formulated a theory about this deviation from the regular party system.¹⁴ He notes too that the long ascendancy

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J.R. Mallory, Social Credit and the Federal Power in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1954), Introduction.

13

S.M. Lipset, "Democracy in Alberta" Canadian Forum, 34: Dec. 1954, p. 96.

14

C.B. Macpherson, "Democracy in Alberta - A Reply", Canadian Forum, 34: January, 1955, p. 223.

of one party in the Federal system may be part of a similar trend. He argues that the traditional democratic party system was breaking down because of the special circumstances in the West, particularly because of the West's colonial relationship toward the rest of the country. Lipset argues that the development must be seen as the "failure of the British parliamentary system to work in a society with complex internal division."¹⁵ Lipset also stresses the importance of the non-party tradition in Alberta's early history as a factor in the later rejection of the alternate-party rule, the norm for Western democracies.¹⁶ This alternate-party pattern never took firm root because of the social structure of prairie agricultural society, and the essentially non-partisan basis of Northwest Territories operations. There was, he claims, no positive basis for an alternate-party system and the national two-party system "was ultimately rejected because it did violence to the political needs of the province."¹⁷ The prairie region then, like Quebec, had

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Lipset, op.cit., pp. 97-98.

16

S.M. Lipset, "Democracy in Alberta", Canadian Forum, 34: Nov. 1954, p. 175.

17

Ibid, p. 177.

to create a local opposition against the Liberals. That opposition could not be part of the Conservative Party because of its historic politics. Yet more important than all this for the new political development was the seriously depressed state of the economy.

The following statistics indicate the state of the economy during the early 1930's. Before 1929, the Gross Annual Agricultural revenue was \$278,040,000. (1928).¹⁸ By 1935, total revenue had fallen to \$148,039,000.¹⁹ Previously heavy capital investment, both by the government and by the individual farmers, had led to the build-up of a debt which fixed many costs even though revenues were falling. Public and personal payments had to continue, regardless of the decreased revenues and incomes. Private indebtedness was at \$395,000,000 in 1936.²⁰ In 1935, "very

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DBS, Canada Year Book (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1931), p. 216.

19

DBS, Canada Year Book (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1937), p. 235.

20

The Annual Report of the Alberta Debt Adjustment Board, 1937, p. 12.

nearly one-half the total provincial revenue was required to service the provincial debt."²¹

In March and April of 1934, Premier Brownlee decided to do something about the ever-increasing demands from many quarters seeking social credit as a solution to the difficult economic conditions, conditions which had worsened every year since 1930, resulting in an increasing public debt and a squeeze on essential services.

Although he seemed incapable of doing anything about these conditions, it is to Brownlee's credit that he arranged for both the foremost Alberta exponents of Social Credit -- William Aberhart, Herbert Boyd and Larkham Collins -- and the British founder C. H. Douglas, to appear before the Committee to outline any action which might be taken to alleviate Alberta's economic plight.

3.2 THE DOUGLAS SYSTEM OF SOCIAL CREDIT

The evidence given to the Agriculture Committee and the Committee's recommendations, which will service as an introduction to the question of social credit ideology and its application in Alberta during the early years of the Social

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H.J. Whalen, The Distinctive Legislation of the Government of Alberta, (1935-1950), unpublished Master's Thesis (Edmonton: 1951), p. 213.

Credit Government, will be presented in some detail in this section. The more recent ideological content of the party will then be analyzed.

In 127 pages of evidence,²² the Committee revealed important differences among alternative interpretations offered by spokesmen for social credit, differences as to the meaning of social credit itself as a concept, differences in definition, objectives, methods and plans. Most crucially, it is clear from the evidence that Aberhart and Douglas had irreconcilably conflicting versions of social credit. Secondly, the constitutional impossibility of having a provincial government implement social credit came out absolutely without question, since proposals dealt with reform of the financial system, a system completely under the control of the federal authority. Thirdly, while the evidence was forceful in pointing out the inadequacies and weaknesses of the existing financial system, no practical plans for provincial action were forthcoming. From an intellectual perspective, the Premier succeeded in pointing out clearly and forcibly the constitutional,

practical, and theoretical problems involved. He published the evidence together with a proposal that Douglas and Aberhart should be retained to work out a plan which the government could follow to make use of social credit theories. But what he and his colleagues failed to recognize, or if they did, failed to take action on, were the emotional and psychological factors which set up a demand for action. Although the United Farmers came to grips with the problem in a rational way, they could not cope with the mood of the people who were anxious for any sign of ways to improve economic conditions and restore prosperity and self-respect to their lives. It seems as if the United Farmers of Alberta failed to realize that whether or not the social credit proposals were practical, they had emotional and psychological meaning. The psychological aspects of the development of social credit are examined by John Irving and I will turn to a consideration of his contribution, following the present section on the Committee's report.

The divergence between Douglas and Aberhart is evident in the Committee's report. Writing some three years later, Douglas remarked that "Aberhart's writings are

defective both in theory and practicability."²³ Larkham Collins, one of the original social credit theorists who testified at the hearings, later remarked that Aberhart "wanted to control everything but credit, which was ostensibly the foundation of Douglas's proposed monetary reform."²⁴ In addressing the Committee, Douglas outlines his objections to the financial system.²⁵ He claimed that money in circulation was never sufficient to enable consumers to buy back goods already produced. In order to increase total purchasing power and then distribute it fairly, he argued that the control of credit, now held privately, had to be captured by the state. The present social debt system should be replaced by a social credit system, where basic dividends are distributed to all members of the society by virtue of membership in the society and not solely through relationship to production.

23

C.H. Douglas, The Alberta Experiment (London: K.R.P. Publications, 1937), p. 22.

24

Reported in the Edmonton Bulletin, January 1937.

25

A summary of Douglas's evidence given to the Committee, op.cit., p. 78-105. J.M. Keynes, in commenting on the Douglas theory in General Theory of Employment, Interest & Money (London: Macmillan, 1936), p. 371, states that "Major Douglas is entitled to claim, as against some of his orthodox adversaries, that he at least has not been wholly oblivious of the outstanding problem of our economic system..."

"My proposals are predicated on the assumption that the power (creation of purchasing power) does not properly reside where it does at the present time."²⁶ The core of the problem, according to Douglas, was the private holding of a monopoly which should be held only by the state. The state control of the total credit system would involve both economic planning, and regulation and control of the price structure. The social credit to be distributed is an unearned increment secured by the association of consumers, a result of the inventiveness and progress of man made possible by association under one government.

Aberhart's version was that a massive injection of money into the system would stimulate business, free men from economic slavery, allow more attention to be paid to culture, arts, and sciences, and encourage people to stay in school longer. Social credit would be kept flowing through compulsory spending, and although profits would be smaller because of a turnover tax, greater over-all business would compensate. To recover costs for dividends, Aberhart would take a percentage of price spreads, a euphemism for a sales

²⁶ Committee, op.cit., p. 105.

tax. As to constitutional problems, Aberhart claimed the Dominion would give Alberta permission to try out the scheme. Aberhart argued that his proposals did not mean the socialization of finance, only its control.

Larkham Collins stated that the fundamental reform involved was the socialization of the national credit. National ownership of a credit system was absolutely necessary to the implementation of the national dividend, which would be given to those whose income was not more than four times the national dividend. To fully implement the proposal, the nationalization of certain phases of industry might be desirable. Clearly, this version is closer to the Douglas version, and goes further than the Aberhart proposals.

The English Social Credit secretariat stated that the Aberhart proposals were not practical as they stood. The Douglas Credit League of Canada issued a statement saying it could see nothing but a Dominion-wide plan. There was no fundamental agreement among the various proponents as to what steps should be taken to implement social credit.

It should be remembered that many of the original following of C. H. Douglas in England were socialists,

particularly those who published The New Age since it was they who gave a good deal of publicity to Douglas. They believed that the ownership of wealth should be the general community, that wealth came as an inheritance of the technique of civilization. They wanted to get away from the idea that the only ground for money is work.

The underlying concept of the Douglas theory was that "the entire resources of a country for the production of wealth should not be regarded as private property, but as a social heritage in which every man, woman and child qua citizen has the right to share..."²⁷ This right would require the complete control of the credit system and the fixing of prices by the state.

Walter Mentz, a prairie publicist and opponent of Aberhart, argues that it is useless to talk of social credit under a system of private ownership.²⁸ All credit, he states, under capitalism is ipso facto private credit, and social assets can only be created through private surpluses.

27

J.S. Thomson, "The Social Credit Experiment under W. Aberhart discussed," Dalhousie Review, 15: October 1935, p. 375.

28

"Whither Alberta," in Canadian Forum, 16: November 1936, p. 9.

Aberhart testified that he was sure the Federal government would be happy to let Alberta try this experiment. Douglas testified that "...you cannot do it -- your problem is to get the power to put it into operation."²⁹ In answer to a question by Premier Brownlee, Douglas replied that they should not attempt to defy the constitution.

Although no one recognized it, the inquiry had effectively collapsed. Premier Brownlee had Douglas explain that the province could not put social credit into operation. But even with this knowledge, Brownlee's successor, R. G. Reid, wrote to Aberhart inviting him to come to Edmonton to put forward a specific plan of action for social credit. By this time, however, Aberhart had turned his religious and educational movements into a growing political force, and he rejected offers from the government. In addition to social credit dividends, Aberhart's program included state medicine, free education, and a number of other popular proposals.

The 1934 Committee report had disclosed the weakness and bankruptcy of the existing economic management, but no obvious plans were put forward which would be both constitutional and practical. Nevertheless, from 1930-35, in the

29

Committee, op.cit., p.97.

depth of the depression, no political party seemed capable of coming forward with ideas or plans to do something about the situation. Since the United Farmers government almost publicly admitted they had nothing to offer, many Albertans who did not really believe in the social credit plans, thought that a change would be useful in any case.

The Liberals were back in action for the 1935 election. They too proposed low interest rates, a publicly owned central bank, and declared their intentions of importing social credit experts to develop a social credit plan. But obviously this could not compare to Aberhart's firm proposals for actual dividends, and his ability to attract, through his radio broadcasts, loyal supporters by the thousands.

During the 1935 campaign, questions raised concerned the practical problems of implementing the scheme, some constitutional questions were raised, and the Economic Safety League was formed to warn people of the dangers of Aberhart's plan.

3.3 THE EARLY SOCIAL CREDIT PERIOD: ABERHART AND IDEOLOGY

We noted that the Agriculture Committee of the Alberta legislature was able to demonstrate rational objections to the substantive proposals of Aberhart and other social creditors. But the government of the day could not deal with the glamorous social movement that was being created, a movement which had many qualities other than the mundane practicality of its plans. Social Credit was helped by the long-standing attacks the United Farmers had been launching against the existing political and financial systems; they, in a sense, set the stage for a William Aberhart.

Perhaps the best known part of the history of the Social Credit Party is its origin. It was founded by William Aberhart and popularized through the programs of the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute, a Christian evangelical fundamentalist organization which had developed originally within a Baptist Church. Beginning in 1924, William Aberhart had conducted a weekly radio ministry over Calgary station CFCN, a program called Canada's National Back to the Bible Hour, a program which is still on the air as of 1972. Thousands of Albertans listened to Aberhart's weekly radio program, and by the mid 1930's, when he began to introduce the idea of social credit as a solution

to the country's economic problems, Aberhart already had a huge and committed audience who associated his economic proposals with his Christian sermons. Most of the listeners already looked to Aberhart for guidance and leadership in religious matters, and they were prepared to listen to him about practical political and economic problems as well. Alberta's second Social Credit Premier is closely associated with the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute as well. It was there that Ernest Manning enrolled as a student in the fall of 1927 to begin a three-year course in religious studies. He became a close associate to Aberhart as well as a hard-working student and diligent religious co-worker. In 1930, he became Secretary of the Institute and was soon travelling through the province with Aberhart who was beginning a long series of speeches on political as well as religious subjects.

John Irving argues that the whole movement should be viewed from a psychological perspective.³⁰ Aberhart offered to free people from a deep-seated sense of guilt and personal inadequacy resulting from their condition. Furthermore, he offered social action as a way to transform the environment.

³⁰ "The Appeal of Social Credit," Queen's Quarterly, vol.60, 1953, p. 147-160; for a complete statement, see Irving, The Social Credit Movement in Alberta (Toronto, 1959).

While the United Farmers of Alberta had disrupted unity between town and country, Social Credit was providing a common ground for all.

Irving identifies four factors which explain the appeal of the Social Credit philosophy:

1. Within the given social context, Social Credit offered an understandable critique of the system.
2. It met the desire to find meaning, offering both an explanation of the depression and a program to get out of it.
3. It promised to satisfy basic needs, not only physical but psychological.
4. Because of preceding political history and current conditions, people were ready to accept the approach.³¹

Aberhart's gross oversimplification of the functioning of the system enabled everyone to think they understood it, regardless of whether or not they could actually assess the content of the interpretation.

Irving outlines the basis of Aberhart's appeal. He was an organizing genius. He had mass appeal, building on his religious radio program (which he began in Calgary in 1924) and he was a charismatic leader.³² Combining his systematic

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Irving, Ibid, p. 155.

32

J.A. Irving, "Psychological Aspects of The Social Credit Movement in Alberta, Part I: Development of a Movement," Canadian Journal of Psychology, March 1947, p. 26.

techniques for organization which he had developed earlier to promote his extensive Bible study classes with the philosophy of social credit as a way of reforming the economic system, and with his powerful speaking abilities, Aberhart presented a tremendous challenge to a fourteen year old government which had no program to restore economic health. Aberhart appeared before the United Farmers convention, but they rejected a resolution to call upon the government to implement social credit, as the leadership of the United Farmers of Alberta was aware of the Committee's report and the government's attempt to retain Aberhart. Many of the United Farmers of Alberta leaders were supporting the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation by this time, although the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation never did attract more than a small percentage of United Farmers of Alberta members.

Irving's summary of the appeal of social credit is worth noting.³³ It was a people's movement. Each group, many based on the old United Farmers of Alberta locals, provided systematic instruction. There was dramatization and the promise of real change, but the movement was built on old and

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Summarized from J. Irving, "Psychological Aspects of Social Credit Movement in Alberta, Part III, An Interpretation," Canadian Journal of Psychology, I: Sept. 1947, pp.127-140.

accepted norms. Broadcasting was used skillfully and extensively. All members could participate actively.

Many radicals in the 1930's became orthodox socialists. While the social credit movement was growing, the leadership of the United Farmers of Alberta became affiliated with the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, which was founded in Calgary in 1932, although the United Farmers of Alberta government itself would accept neither social credit nor the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation.

The 1935 election resulted in the highest turnout of electorate ever recorded in Alberta. Eighty-two percent of the electorate voted.³⁴ This level of eighty-two percent has never again been equalled. Subsequent voter turnout was as follows:

1940 - 75%, 1944 - 69%, 1948 - 64%, 1952 - 59%,
1955 - 68%, 1959 - 63%.

Voter turnout gradually dropped but started increasing in the sixties and in 1972 there was a dramatic increase to 73%.

Scarrow's proposition that voter turnout is related to increased competitiveness certainly appears to be true in Alberta. Fifty-four percent of the 1935 vote was for Social Credit.

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Howard A. Scarrow "Patterns of Voter Turnout in Canada", Voting in Canada, John C. Courtney, Editor (Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1967), p. 107.

Once in office, Aberhart, Alberta's seventh premier, had to carry on normal government business and, in addition, his own extensive promises. He began the first obligation by raising new loans through Ottawa, increasing taxes, and tightening government spending - not exactly revolutionary tactics. He began his second obligation by writing to Douglas in London requesting advice about a social credit plan. This began an interesting exchange of letters and telegrams which ended in a complete break between the Premier and the English writer. But the serious differences between the two were evident prior to the 1934 Committee hearing, in their conflicting attitudes toward social reform, and in their fundamental assumptions about politics.

The Ideology of the Party

The early works of Douglas, the source of Aberhart's proposals for reform, centered on a theory of economic and political democracy, fundamental to which was the nationalization of banks and credit institutions. These works include Economic Democracy³⁵ and The Monopoly of Credit,³⁶ and a whole series of articles and pamphlets published by the Social Credit

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C.H. Douglas (Belfast: K.R.P. Publications, 1958).

36

Douglas (Los Angeles: Omni Publications, 1967). Other works include Credit, Power and Democracy, and The Alberta Experiment, op. cit.

Secretariat in London, and others published by the Social Credit Secretariat in Australia. His later works, which eventually developed into the infamous world plot study, are of no interest to this study, since they had only a very minor influence on Alberta politics, and then only within a small band of Douglasites who were later expelled from the party.

Aberhart's religious and ethical beliefs were in conflict with the Douglas theory of social credit. This eventually forced Aberhart to choose between them. He chose his fundamental religious beliefs rather than the Douglas social credit theories. That there is a conflict between the theory of social credit and fundamentalist Christianity is not generally known. Aberhart's socialization as a child into the puritan-protestant work-ethic was too strong for him to accept the idea of an economic democracy as an objective. Aberhart would have to reject one of the two. He rejected social credit. It became clear in his proposal to pay a social credit dividend, that, unless used wisely, dividends would be stopped, and eventually, work would be a requisite of receiving dividends.

This underlying conflict has been covered up by those who argue that there were strict legal restrictions to the

implementation of the social credit ideas, and by the participants themselves. As far as it goes, the legal story is correct. In fact, the courts provided a handy escape mechanism from the underlying psychological and philosophical conflict which then did not have to be faced.

If we make a distinction between the general objectives of the social credit theory, and the technical consideration of the methods which would be necessary to implement these objectives, this conflict becomes clear. Much of the literature concentrates on the technical questions of whether or not the propositions Douglas put forward about prices and total purchasing power (The A+B theorem) were technically correct. It is surely obvious that many proponents of social credit never understood the technical aspects of the propositions they were putting forward, and in fact probably were, quite unwittingly, in basic disagreement with the assumptions upon which the social credit theory was built.

The idea of an economic democracy being a necessary conjunction of a political democracy was based on the belief that the economically strong and powerful (whether individuals

or institutions) could dominate the weak and exert undue control over the lives of the economically weak. To free the economically weak from this control and hence from loss of freedom and loss of effective political democracy, the credit of the society at large was to be disbursed to all citizens. This was to be an absolutely universal disbursal of a dividend, ensuring every citizen a share in the total wealth.

The puritan work ethic stands in opposition to this approach. Reward should be for service or control or productivity only; work is seen as a moral imperative and full employment is the objective. The universal dispersal of economic power, where economic power is distributed similarly to the distribution of votes in a political democracy, is rejected. This results, according to Douglas, in wasteful capitalist production, and in the necessity of developing the economy at all costs, regardless of the exploitation within the economic system or the human and social costs of such development. The idea is that the cultural heritage -- that is, the combination of natural resources, the accumulated knowledge of men living together, and other social assets -- being the property of all rather than of some individuals, should and can be distributed equitably. That is the basis of the guaranteed dividend.

Without economic democracy, argues Douglas, tension is continually present in the economic and other systems leading to compulsion and exploitation. In an economic democracy, through distribution of economic power (analogous to distribution of political power), there would be a choice, leading to freedom from external control. The essence was to be in public control and dispersal of economic power. Aberhart chose some of the radical elements of the theory, which called for fundamental reform, rejected most of them, and mixed those he chose with his traditional and more conservative Christian beliefs.

As in most agrarian movements, there was no systematic doctrine, or coherent structure of values. More often, there is a practical ideology, not shaped schematically resulting in conflicts within the belief system. As in European agrarianism, one of the main characteristics of prairie agrarianism was a preference for creative, economic, and cultural radicalism rather than revolution. Private property was seen as fundamental to both the United Farmers of Alberta and political conflicts within the system which could be resolved through reforms.³⁷

³⁷ In other words, like other agrarian movements, it was radical and reform oriented, but not revolutionary.

There were smaller independent social credit study groups who were aware of the ideological differences between Douglas and Aberhart.³⁸ For example, the New Age Club, a social credit club consisting of individuals who undertook an analytical and critical study of social credit, did not hesitate to disagree with Aberhart and refused to accept all of his statements as truisms. They were dubious about the possibility of imposing social credit provincially, and they were aware of the differences between the assumptions of the two. The vast majority of social creditors followed Aberhart, deciding that they had had enough of Douglas. But a small group stayed with Douglas. The first of a series of schisms occurred even before electoral success, and at one point Aberhart resigned as President of the Alberta movement. Two other major schisms occurred, leading to a back-benchers revolt against Aberhart in 1937, and in 1947, to the dismissal and dismantling of the Social Credit Board by Premier Manning. The same schism recurred in 1971, when, now out of office, one group

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The New Age Club, the Douglas Social Credit Association, The Canadian Social Credit Organization, The Douglas Credit Group.

of dissidents accused the present leadership of not upholding social credit ideas and policies, and the party responded by lifting the membership of a former long-time cabinet minister.

The break between Aberhart and Douglas is recorded in Aberhart of Alberta.³⁹ In a series of fifty-five letters and telegrams, the impossibility of the two working together became clear. Douglas claimed that Aberhart was not taking his advice and that there was no point in his coming to Alberta unless his preliminary proposals were adopted. Aberhart claimed that he had expected to receive an over-all plan for the implementation of the Douglas social credit theory, and that no plan had been forwarded. The correspondence indicates that Douglas believed that Aberhart did not understand what would be involved in breaking the money monopoly, while Aberhart was chagrined at the refusal of Douglas to come to Alberta to discuss plans. Finally Aberhart announced that "Major Douglas had lost the confidence of the people...he is more of a theorist than a practical realist."⁴⁰

³⁹ L.P.V. Johnson and Ola MacNutt (Edmonton: Institute of Applied Art, 1970), p. 150-162, record of letters and telegrams.

⁴⁰ Schultz thesis, op.cit., quoted on page 192.

Aberhart carried on in an orthodox manner, although he did carry out an experiment with dated stamp scrip for public works projects, notably road-building.⁴¹ It had some success, and some thought it was the beginning of social credit money, but the plan was eventually scrapped, since it did not find acceptance among the firms who were asked to cooperate.

Aberhart still wanted to take some action; in fact, he had to, as many of his back-benchers were starting to ask questions about when social credit would be introduced. Since his relationship with the founder had dissolved, he took on another English social credit advisor, John Hargrave, who happened to be at odds with Douglas. But Hargrave soon departed, saying he "had no confidence in the mere vacillating machine which starts, stops and reverses."⁴²

In addition to his work to balance the budget, improve efficiency and reorganize, Aberhart brought in new measures to reduce or alleviate debt, and introduced industrial and labor legislation which provided some relief to farmers and workers.

41

A plan developed by Yale economist Irving Fisher in Stamp Scrip (New York, 1933).

42

Quoted in Edmonton Bulletin, 1937, January 25, p. 1.

But he had to admit his failure to establish social credit, and asked the constituency organizers to decide whether or not he should resign.

Many back-benchers, prodded by their constituents for the promised dividends, were growing angry at the lack of social credit legislation, and were particularly disgusted with the orthodox budget presented to the 1937 session of the Legislature. Aberhart is reported to have said, following his 1935 victory, that "75% of those who voted for me don't expect any dividend, but hope for a just and honest government."⁴³ His followers, he believed, would understand that he would act fairly and do what he could, but he had always argued that details of implementing plans could be done at a later date. Many of his back-benchers did not accept this argument, and would not be put off for another year. The insurgents said that Aberhart "should work for six days, and rest on the seventh, rather than do nothing for six days, and on Sundays use the Bible and religion to pretend to be fighting for social credit."⁴⁴

43

Quoted in H.J. Schultz, "The Social Credit Back-Benchers Revolt, 1937," Canadian Historical Review, 41: March, 1960.

44

Quoted in The Rebel, June 11, 1935.

In 1936, Aberhart passed the Alberta citizens registration covenant, in preparation for the social credit dividends. Three hundred and sixty thousand Albertans signed covenants agreeing to co-operate with the government in carrying out the plan.⁴⁵ The Credit House Act was also passed which in substance constituted a system of banking and fell clearly within Section 91 of the British North American Act. Three Acts, the Credit of Alberta Regulations Act, the Bank Employees Act, and the Judicature Act were all disallowed by Prime Minister King who had first requested that Premier Aberhart voluntarily request a court review of the Acts. Aberhart would not and refused to believe that the federal power of disallowance would be used against his legislation, having some ground to think that such power was obsolete. Mallory claims that it was a clear-cut example of circumstances under which there is no alternative to disallowance, and that Canadian federalism required this demonstration of central control to maintain unity.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Hugh Whalen, "Social Credit Measures in Alberta", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Nov. 1952, Vol. XVIII, p.500.

⁴⁶ J. R. Mallory, "Disallowance and the National Interest", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Aug. 1948, Vol. XIV, p.356.

A word about the state of the Social Credit Party movement is perhaps appropriate here. By 1936, the Social Credit Party had a paid up membership of over 32,000, organized into 1100 groups.⁴⁷ This total has never been reached again, as of this writing (1972). Local groups were active, and social events as well as political and educational activities made the party appealing to many who would attend picnics, sing-songs, speaking events and study groups. Organization was careful and extensive. By 1939 membership had dropped to 24,142.⁴⁸

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Social Credit League First Annual Convention Report, 1937, pp.4-5.

48

Social Credit League Fourth Annual Convention Report, (Edmonton: 1940), p.6.

3.4 SOME INTERPRETATIONS OF THE EARLY SOCIAL CREDIT PERIOD

The two main works which contribute to an understanding of the early Alberta Social Credit Party, are Macpherson's Democracy in Alberta,⁴⁹ and Irving's The Alberta Social Credit Movement.⁵⁰ It will be useful prior to presenting the history of the party and characteristics of party membership, to introduce some of the ideas found in these two works.

C.B. Macpherson has put forward the most comprehensive theory about the party system in Alberta. The nature of society in Alberta, a subordinate part of the mature capitalist economy, he argues, led to the rejection of the orthodox party system. The orthodox system was replaced by a quasi-party system, a system characterized by a search for economic justice which could only be obtained through a change in the system of government. Albertans had been seeking just such a change for many years prior to the advent of the Social Credit Party, but it was never achieved. The quasi-colonial status of the economy, and the homogeneous

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Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1953.

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Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959.

class composition (most Albertans were independent commodity producers), meant that alternate parties were, for many years, simply not needed to perform the usual functions of moderating interest conflicts. In fact, the United Farmers of Alberta denounced the very concept of party system as the means whereby the moneyed interests divided and ruled the mass of the people.

English Social Credit was meanwhile being formulated by C. H. Douglas. It was, says Macpherson, more than monetary reform; urban and cosmopolitan, it was a vision of a new society, an epochal vision which raised fundamental questions of human values, freedom, and individual self-development.⁵¹

The Douglas Social Credit ideology had called for:

1. The socialization of banking and the issuance of credit dividends,
2. Fixation of prices, and
3. State economic planning of production.⁵²

Aberhart, Albert's most vocal exponent of Social Credit, ensured the vulgarization of the social

⁵¹ Macpherson, op.cit., pp.95-96.

⁵² Summary of Social Credit objectives from L. H. Garstin "Social Credit's Five Years in Alberta", Dalhousie Review, Vol. 20, 1940-1941, p.149

and economic doctrines of Douglas, but saw his role as providing a desire for results, a raising of expectations, rather than providing a substantive plan. Macpherson argues that Aberhart's approach to government was totally orthodox and, once in office, he reduced the status of the functions of both the Members of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislature. The United Farmers of Alberta delegate system became a secular revival meeting, just as his campaign had taken on messianic overtones. But the most important factor in Alberta's political development was the oscillation between conservatism and radicalism; the conception Alberta Social Creditors had of themselves as independent kept the party and the government from unduly radical behavior. This mistaken consciousness, this illusory independence, made the system veer back toward conservatism. The quasi-party system which characterized Alberta's politics for many years was, according to Macpherson, mid-way between alternate party and a one-party system. This approach although partly useful in understanding the period, unfortunately does not fit with the facts in many instances, particularly when election results are analyzed in popular percentage points rather than total seats. For example, in 1967 although the Social Credit Party

held fifty-five seats in a sixty-five seat House, Alberta may have looked like a one-party province. Yet the combined opposition popular vote was 54%. Nonetheless his interpretation is useful background for studying the development of the party system in Alberta.

While Macpherson provides a theory about the nature of the party system in Alberta, J.A. Irving provides a theory about the nature of the appeal made specifically by the Alberta Social Credit Party, and seeks to answer the question, why Social Credit in Alberta? Irving is interested in the psychology of the social movement during the formative years, rather than the institutionalized political party. While emphasizing the psychological appeal, the desire for meaning and order, and the promise of satisfaction of primary needs, Irving warns against underestimating the importance of William Aberhart's leadership, combining "the functions of the prophet with the executive capacities of the great planner and organizer. As a prophetic leader, Aberhart may be interpreted in terms of his unification of Christianity and the philosophy of Social Credit, his resolution of his followers' problems of ego involvement and his charismatic appeal."⁵³

Social Credit was presented as the parallel, in the economic and political life of Albertans, of the Divine plan for religious salvation. To Irving, the continuation of the long-existing religious movement and its integration into a political force is a paramount factor. The movement was carefully organized, the image was aggressive, dynamic, and exciting. Aberhart's use of the radio enabled him to reach most of his constituents on a weekly basis, and his skill in this field allowed him to keep the movement going, to keep in contact with his followers, to answer critics almost before their criticism was known to the general public.

The final crucial point in Irving's interpretation involves the content of the proposals advocated by Aberhart. By talking about reform through transformation of the monetary and financial system, the movement could ally itself with existing institutions and social norms, whereas, for example, a socialist alternative would probably not have found, and did not find, intellectual and emotional acceptance among most Albertans at that time, or for many years thereafter. The explanations and implications of the Alberta Social Credit Party will now be left until the data generated in the study have been presented.

3.5 THE MANNING YEARS

By 1940, it was clear that the opposition was coalescing into one group: the Independents. They promised businesslike, efficient government and an end to attempts to introduce Social Credit legislation. The theme of the 1940 Social Credit campaign, which subsequently became a standard theme, was "good government". Aberhart stressed debt legislation over dividends: "Never mind the dividends," the Premier said, "let them go. After getting 95% (presumably of what he had promised), are you going to pluck me on that?"⁵⁴

Aberhart had already begun to stress provincial rights as a theme.⁵⁵ He won re-election with 43% of the vote, a substantial decrease from his 1935 win of over 55% of the votes. One thousand votes' difference in selected ridings would have

⁵⁴ Edmonton Bulletin, March 7, 1940.

⁵⁵ Case for Alberta, published by the Alberta Government in 1938, a call for greater concern for interests of the West by the Federal Government.

led to Aberhart's fall. He was not in the solid position most of the myths about the solidness of Aberhart and Social Credit's strength have managed to convey.

With the outbreak of war, it was decided that no further controversial legislation would be brought forward during the war. Aberhart promised in his regular Sunday broadcast "to give a good, honest government, with social services as adequate as conditions allow."⁵⁶ Wartime powers of the Federal Government drastically reduced the role of the provinces in over-all decision-making. Aberhart died in 1943 at the age of sixty-four, in Vancouver. His statement about his intentions to give good honest government, and to expand social services as rapidly as possible, is a key to understanding the next several elections in Alberta, and to appreciating the approach of Ernest Manning, Aberhart's successor.

One more attempt was made to introduce Social Credit. Manning's government passed the Alberta Bill of Rights in 1943, following insistent demands from the December Social Credit Convention that Social Credit could now be pursued since the war was over and the agreement to withhold controversial

⁵⁶ Quoted in H.J. Schultz, "A Second Term: 1940." Alberta Historical Review, Vol. 10, 1962, p. 24.

legislation was ended. The Alberta Bill of Rights specified in the first part that every citizen was entitled to the opportunity to engage in gainful employment or to receive security pension if employment was not available, every citizen under nineteen was entitled to necessities of life, educational and medical benefits, and every citizen sixty and over was entitled to a security pension.⁵⁷ The second part contained provisions to regulate and license the issuance of credit, and maintain a balance between aggregate purchasing power and collective prices of goods for sale. It was put forward with the provision that the Supreme Court would have to rule on its constitutionality, and was intended it would seem to placate those segments of the party who were expecting further Social Credit legislation. The Act was duly declared ultra vires in 1947, and the last official vestiges of Douglas credit went with the abolition of the Social Credit Board in 1948, and the resignations of those who were responsible for its 1947 report which had called for, among other measures, the end to the secret ballot, which outraged the newspapers and embarrassed the Manning government.

⁵⁷ The Alberta Bill of Rights (Charter of Freedom)
(Edmonton: King's Printer, 1947).

From 1935 to 1947, if the legislation failed to bring Social Credit dividends, and "failed to offer relief to the farmer and urban debtor through the introduction of Social Credit, it certainly provided a large volume of legislation designed to protect and assist the debtors of the province."⁵⁸ Altogether, thirteen Alberta Acts were disallowed, reserved or declared ultra vires.⁵⁹

During the Manning era, efforts turned away from Social Credit legislation and concentrated instead on debt legislation, educational and municipal development, resources development, health and welfare legislation, and later, during the sixties, on political realignment and on human resource development -- concepts which will be discussed and evaluated later.

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Hugh J. Whalen, The Distinctive Legislation of the Government of Alberta (1935-1950), Unpublished Master's Thesis, Edmonton, University of Alberta, 1951.

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For a complete list of distinctive Social Credit legislation see Hugh J. Whalen, The Distinctive Legislation of the Government of Alberta, (unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, 1951), index of Social Credit legislation. For comments on the purpose of the legislation see A.J. Hooke: 30+5, I Know, I Was There (Edmonton: Institute of Applied Art, 1971).

The 1944 Election

Manning had taken over following Aberhart's death in 1943. His first election, the election of 1944, was the beginning of a new alignment. The war had opened markets, production had increased and prosperity was widespread. The death of Aberhart played a part in the campaign also; as many people, say, those who had supported Aberhart in 1935 but not in 1940, would support the Social Credit Party and the new Premier, as a kind of tribute to William Aberhart. Another key factor was the rise of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, offering an orthodox, if cautious, form of socialism. The proposals of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation were branded by the Social Credit party as the regimentation of the many by the few. Manning and other speakers began to draw a clear distinction between the two, and made the election into a choice between Social Credit and Socialism. Manning's government was elected with a solid majority. By 1945, the League, although requesting Social Credit legislation and making Federal efforts, was working primarily on resolutions seeking an increase for old age pensioners (fought against by the Provincial Treasurer, Solon Low, but passed anyway), greater over-all social security benefits, extended municipal and hospitalization benefits, and other similar progressive measures.

In addition to the "Social Credit or socialism" slogan, the 1944 campaign centered around the social legislation, debt legislation, and medical services advancements made by the government. The Edmonton Bulletin of July 18th, backed Premier Manning as "young, able, honest and efficient. In fact, his handling of Alberta affairs is the envy of every other province in Canada. Alberta has the most advanced social legislation...". Manning proclaimed his goal as "full and complete social and economic security with freedom for all."⁶⁰

Manning carried on negotiations with the bondholders (one of the problems unresolved in Aberhart's day). Alberta had defaulted on interest payments and Manning wanted to restore both Alberta's respectability and its credit rating without paying out bondholders at an excessive rate. With the problem under active negotiation, businessmen felt they need not fear Manning and could, in fact, support him. All of these factors combined to give Manning a larger share of the vote (52%) than Aberhart had received in 1940. The opposition won only six seats, although the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation ran second in 31 ridings. "Ernest

Manning's first objective and accomplishment as Premier was to de-radicalize Social Credit, to transform it into a successful middle of the road government."⁶¹

Election of 1948

The Social Credit ten-point Program for the next five years was as follows:

1. Natural Resources - rapid and orderly development of Alberta's vast natural resources in the best interests of all her citizens.
2. Agriculture - a vigorous program to further improve and stabilize Alberta's basic industry, farming.
3. Electrification - extension of rural electrification throughout Alberta as rapidly as possible.
4. Health - progressive expansion of Alberta's public health and social welfare program, already one of the best in Canada.
5. Municipal Affairs - a new and better deal for Alberta municipalities through implementation of the Judge Commission Report.
6. Education - constant efforts to still further improve Alberta's modern system of education and reduce the cost to municipal districts.
7. Roads - progressive extension of Alberta's road program until the entire province is served by an adequate system of all-weather roads and highways.

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From John J. Barr, Manning, unpublished manuscript, Edmonton.

8. Industrial Development - industrial and economic development to increase Alberta payrolls and save excessive freight charges on exports and imports.
9. Labor - full cooperation with labor and management to ensure just rights of both and assure uninterrupted production.
10. The People's Rights - a continuation of the Government's unrelenting fight to make secure the right of each and every citizen to social justice, economic security, and individual freedom.

Manning announced that sixty different companies were developing one hundred different oil producing areas in Alberta -- millions of dollars were accruing to the Treasury annually from the royalty of 12.5% of gross revenue. The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation concentrated its attack on Manning and Social Credit as being no longer radical, no longer working for the common man, and charged that the party had become just another Conservative party.

The Liberals finally re-emerged as a distinctive party, the leadership having been taken over by J. Harper Prowse. Prowse built up the Liberal Party from that point on until he could mount a full-scale assault on the government in the 1950's. The Liberals campaigned on the basis of an increase in

old age pensions, assistance to enable low-income groups to purchase homes, and an attempt to get more industry into the province.

The Liberal Party became the official opposition to the Social Credit government, but could not make sufficient inroads either in the appeal of an alternate platform, in attacks on the government, or in leadership ability, to overthrow Manning. As Aberhart had been quick to take advantage of radio, and mastering its techniques, as a means of communicating directly with the voters, Manning took to television with a regular program called Telefacts. On this program, he outlined government programs, and announced long-range plans for Alberta's development, and solidified his position as the undisputed leader of Albertans.

In 1955, Manning began Alberta-wide political broadcasts, called "These are the Facts", designed to "give facts concerning public services, government policies, programs and actions."⁶² The first series, radio talks, covered old

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January 10, 1955, These are the Facts, Alberta Social Credit League, Complete record of radio and television broadcasts.

age security benefits, health care services, export of resources, government finance, services to agriculture, education grants, freight rates, federal-provincial relations. Finally, on the May 17th special television program, the 1955 election was announced. Television specials continued, denouncing the tactics of the opposition Liberals, and outlining the government's programs. The opposition's strategy of the 1955 election was one of attacking various Members of the Legislative Assembly, Ministers and the Premier himself, for using public office for personal gain. Manning spent considerable time answering the charges and outlining in detail the financial dealings referred to by the opposition. The 1955 election resulted in the re-election of Manning although the Liberals increased their share of the vote from 22% in 1952 to 31% in 1955. By 1963, this dropped to 19%, and finally to 10% in the 1967 election.

In the 1958 broadcasts, Manning launched renewed attacks on the old line parties, and began new talks on financial reform, both on the radio broadcasts and in a television special. This was primarily an attempt to salvage the Federal Social Credit activities, but the sweep of John Diefenbaker in the 1958 election decimated the Federal wing of the party.

From 1947 to 1963, over six billion dollars of investment capital had been spent in Alberta in the development of the oil and gas resources. The 1963 series of broadcasts dealt with public power (utilities) versus the mixed public-private-cooperative system, oil development and surface rights, Throne Speech, legislation and an outline of the 1963 budget. In appealing to the electorate, Manning based his campaign on:

1. The record of achievement.
2. The program for the next four years which included northern development and a platform of capital works construction and expanded social services.
3. Experience, and
4. Work to make Alberta a model of sound, practical democracy.

Campaigning on leadership and stability, and contrasting Alberta with the minority government situation in Ottawa, Manning was re-elected with 54% of the vote. Since the virtual demise of the Liberal Party, no other opposition had been able by that time to form a strong enough organization and campaign to effectively oppose the government party.

Then, in the 1967 session of the legislature, Manning

tabled the White Paper on Human Resources,⁶³ outlining his objectives for the Alberta Government, and using it as the platform for the upcoming 1967 election. He won, although the popular vote slipped to 44.6%, and the opposition party, this time the Conservatives, made a strong showing with 26% of the vote, more than doubling their 1963 vote, and increasing from 1.6% in the 1953 election.

To the charge and general view that the Alberta Social Credit Party had become just another party machine, and that the Alberta Government was now both conservative and orthodox, Manning replied, "We've done things no conservative government would ever do."⁶⁴ He then went on to summarize the Alberta legislative record, the spending programs, and the developing network of social services programs. Prowse retired from the leadership of the Liberal Party, which then went back to its drifting state, and the Conservative Party began revitalizing itself with the selection of a new leader, a young lawyer from Calgary, Peter Lougheed.

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Alberta Government, Edmonton, (Queen's Printers, 1967).

64

From an address to the Alberta Social Credit League's Annual Convention, Calgary, November, 1962.

3.6 THE MANNING PAPERS

There are two main developments of the sixties which require explication. The first is the White Paper already mentioned, which articulates the direction and ideology of the Manning government; the second, the publication of Political Realignment, in 1967, which outlined Manning's view of the future of the Social Credit Party federally and had a deep effect both on Federal and Provincial activities of the party. Both of these documents will be discussed.

The White Paper

Although the government had produced numberless department, board and agency reports, and Manning was active in communicating his programs and policies to the people of Alberta, as has been shown, no significant statement of overall objectives had been put forward since the Reports of the Alberta Post-War Reconstruction Committee.⁶⁵

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See Alberta Post-War Reconstruction Report of the Subcommittee on Finance, King's Printers, 1945, outlining "a process of social engineering designed to secure Social Credit in Alberta," committee chaired by A.J. Hooke. Also see Committee Report: The Existing Financial System, 1943.

The closest approximation to such a development were the previous five year programs which outlined the government's proposed course of action if re-elected.

The purpose of the White Paper on Human Resource Development was to "provide an initial synthesis of governmental thinking and pertinent research findings, in the form of new concepts and policies for the future, to outline certain principles and values..., to outline an orientation and emphasis relative to human resource development..., and to outline a system of governmental policies and programs designed to facilitate the fullest and most integrated development possible of the human and physical resources of the Province of Alberta."⁶⁶ The time has come, says the paper, "for humanitarian values and social concern to be registered in a much more positive and explicit way."⁶⁷

Having stated a number of social and economic objectives, the paper then goes on to outline modifications, reforms, and new policies required to meet the general aim of greater assistance to individual Albertans for development and maximization of opportunities. This includes, among other

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E.C. Manning, White Paper, Ibid., p. 13.

⁶⁷

Ibid., p. 25

things, improved government decision-making through increased social science research, improved evaluation procedures, and an emphasis on policy development, the development of a research industry in Alberta through activity encouraging and fostering "educational, social, economic and other research relating to and affecting the development and conservation of human resources,"⁶⁸ and in particular, to initiate comprehensive studies in the fields of mental health and penology.⁶⁹ The objective was to shift the emphasis in all provincial institutions away from the merely custodial function, and toward the rehabilitative and developmental.

The paper then outlines the need for improved administrative structures and proposed such new organizations as the Human Resources Development Authority (to co-ordinate development), the Alberta Advisory Council (to advise on social and economic needs), and the Human Resources Research Council. "Concern for human values and human needs is the dominant factor underlying the government's determination

68

Ibid., p. 75.

69

This commitment resulted in Report on Mental Health in Alberta, Dr. Blair (Alberta Government, 1969), and McGrath Report (Alberta Government, 1969).

to...enhance the role of free and creative individuals in and through the maximum development of the province's total human and physical resources."⁷⁰

The overall effect of the paper is difficult to assess. Some, such as A. J. Hooke, say they were astonished that not one word had been said about monetary reform.⁷¹ The opposition said it was about time the Social Credit had discovered there were people in Alberta. One opposition candidate said that "it was the first time in history a government had gone to battle clad only in a white paper."⁷²

But the White Paper did form the foundation for a whole series of new government programs, and reflected an emphasis and commitment to give priority to some long-neglected fields, (e.g., mental health, penology), and to strengthen support of some other ones, (education, universities, health programs, special poverty programs).

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E. C. Manning, White Paper, Ibid, p. 89.

71

A. J. Hooke, 30+5, op.cit., Chapter 19.

72

Joe Clark, Conservative candidate in Calgary, 1967 election.

The Publication of Political Realignment

The publication of Manning's views on the future of the Social Credit Party federally, and his suggestions for realignment⁷³ had a deep effect on:

1. The federal activities of the party
2. The future strength of the provincial party, and,
3. Relations with other Social Credit parties, notably the Quebec Federal Group.

In the work, Manning states his objections to the federal party system especially over the lack of policy-generating capability within the parties, arguing that all federal parties were deficient insofar as they are not constructed to:

1. Carry out policy research and development work.
2. Collect and interpret data on a systematic basis, and
3. Develop communications to the public to both stimulate debate and provide information.⁷⁴

Manning goes on to develop what he calls the social conservative philosophy, the philosophy which he advocated

73

E.C. Manning, Political Realignment (McClelland and Stewart: Toronto, 1967).

74

Ibid., pp.42-44.

for Canada, and the ideology by which he governed Alberta. His concept was a synthesis of the social doctrines of humanitarian socialism (emphasizing human needs and social welfare), and the economic doctrine of the liberal-conservative tradition (emphasizing the supremacy of the individual, and decentralized decision-making in the economy). He argued that the socialist position is devoid of an economic system appropriate to Canada, and that the Canadian liberal-conservative tradition "has been lacking in positive commitment to social goals...."⁷⁵ The Social Conservative position, said Manning, represented a synthesis of political thinking designed to meet the needs of contemporary Canadians. "At the heart of the Social Conservative position is a renewed commitment to the development of individual human beings...to avoid the error of those who define their political utopia in collectivistic and socialistic terms (in terms of the ideal society rather than ideal individuals)..."⁷⁶ Manning then related this concept to Social Credit in Alberta, saying that Social Credit was compatible with Social Conservatism.

75

Manning, op. cit., p. 62.

76

Manning, ibid., p. 69.

The author then attempted to show the similarity between the federal Progressive Conservatives, and Social Credit provincially,⁷⁷ claiming that many provincial Social Credit voters in Alberta voted Conservative federally. He concluded by saying that "the Social Credit Party can make its maximum contribution...by doing everything possible to encourage and assist in bringing about an effective re-organization of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada."⁷⁸ The first result of the book was the virtual withdrawal of the western Social Credit groups from Federal activity. Where previously Social Credit had fielded a full slate of Federal candidates, almost all constituencies withdrew from the Federal party.

The eastern Social Credit groups were furious at Manning's proposal and went their own way with Real Caouette. Provincially, although little solid evidence is available at present, it is likely that at least some voters decided that if there were to vote Conservative federally, and if differences between Social Credit and Progressive Conservatives were insignificant, they could vote consistently, and support the Conservatives provincially as well as federally.

77

As will be shown, in chapter six (Section 6.3), a large percentage of Social Credit party members do vote Conservative federally.

78

Manning, op. cit., p.76.

Manning had been Aberhart's personal aide and assistant since 1934. He had entered Aberhart's cabinet at the age of twenty-seven and became Premier at age thirty-four. By 1968, he had been Premier for a quarter of a century, and had begun a new orientation within the government with his White Paper on Human Resources; he had led the party successfully through the 1967 election, although, as the tables indicate, urban strength was getting lower, as was overall party strength. On September 27, 1968, he announced his retirement from public life, opening the way for a leadership fight at the November convention. A number of his cabinet ministers, and one backbencher, announced intentions to seek the position.

The new leader was Harry Strom, chosen on the second ballot, with Gordon Taylor running second. The new Premier took office in December, 1968, and had about three years to prepare for the next election, if the traditional pattern was followed, or a maximum of four, if the maximum five-year term was to be utilized. Strom began his term of office with Manning's cabinet virtually intact, and the first session of legislation under his leadership was one of routine business and mostly administrative legislation.

The retirement of Manning and the selection of his successor brings the history section of this chapter to a conclusion. The building of the Conservative Party and the summer election of 1971 which ended thirty-six years of Social Credit rule, will not be discussed in this chapter, since the immediate objective is to see the Social Credit Party in its historical perspective in preparation for the major presentation of this study; that is, an analysis of the Social Credit Party membership, their characteristics, and activities as party members as of 1969.

3.7 SUMMARY AND ELECTORAL TRENDS

It is evident from the appended bibliography on social credit and the Social Credit Party, that most of the literature concentrates on the early years of the party's regime in Alberta. This is not surprising, given the controversial nature of Aberhart's years in office and the flurry of legislation resulting in disallowance, Court cases, and withholding of assent. Yet the bulk of the legislation which was passed, and the majority of years of the administration are probably at least as important as the controversies. The legislation which failed is perhaps more

distinctive; but the legislation which was passed and the policies which were implemented had actual consequence in shaping the economic, social, and political life of the province. There remains a need for an analysis of the legislation and policies of the fifties and sixties, but such a study is beyond the scope of the present work, since the primary concern is the party itself and its members.

One final factor which must at least be recognized and mentioned prior to a presentation of election statistics is the kind of electoral arrangements which a system employs and its effects of the development of a particular party system. Eckstein, in reviewing the hypothesis that the simple majority single ballot leads to a two-party system,⁷⁹ argues that such an approach often lacks empirical fit. He questions the theory that party systems are essentially products of electoral arrangements of the formal rules governing their competitions. Leon Epstein argues that party forces usually eventually secure the kind of election system they want.⁸⁰ But this obviously applies only to parties

79

Harry Eckstein, "Party Systems," in Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, II (Macmillan and Free Press, 1968), p. 447.

80

Leon D. Epstein, "A Comparative Study of Canadian Parties," American Political Science Review, LVIII, No. 1, March, 1964, pp. 46-59.

that are at least successful to the extent that they can have electoral arrangements modified, for instance, adopt a modified proportional representation for the single member, simple-plurality system, depending on objectives. However, the simple majority single ballot does yield unusual results in the distribution of legislative seats. For several years this system resulted in a distorted image of Social Credit strength, leading the bolder analysts to argue that there was no party system in Alberta; but, as can be noted in the graphs to follow, strength as measured by popular vote differs greatly from the image which a large number of seats held tends to create. The 1955 Liberal vote is significant; as outlined earlier, this was the culmination of an aggressive thrust against the Social Credit Party which was very effective in terms of popular vote, even though it did not result in a large number of seats.

Table II presents the trends of the major parties in bar graph form, enabling the reader to note the changing relative and total strengths of the parties. The Social Credit vote remained strong, but as the Liberal vote was dropping, the Progressive Conservative vote was gradually increasing.

Tables III and IV, again in bar graph form, break the information into rural and urban vote categories, showing

relative party strengths for the four elections. The trend is very clear: the Social Credit vote dropped significantly in each election, but especially so in the urban areas. At the same time the urban areas were increasing steadily in total population. Following the 1967 election, the size of the legislature was increased by ten seats, all of them urban. A projection of the trend helps in appreciating the 1971 results, although an analysis of the 1971 election goes beyond the terms of reference required to study the membership and social base of the Social Credit Party while it was in office.

The 1971 results were as follows:

Progressive Conservative	46%	
Social Credit	41%	
New Democratic Party	11%	
Liberal Party	1%	81

Since the tables were prepared to give a reader a brief summary of trends, the 1959 results were excluded for the sake of brevity. They are similar to the 1963 results.

TABLE III-1

VOTING TRENDS
ALBERTA: 1952 - 1967

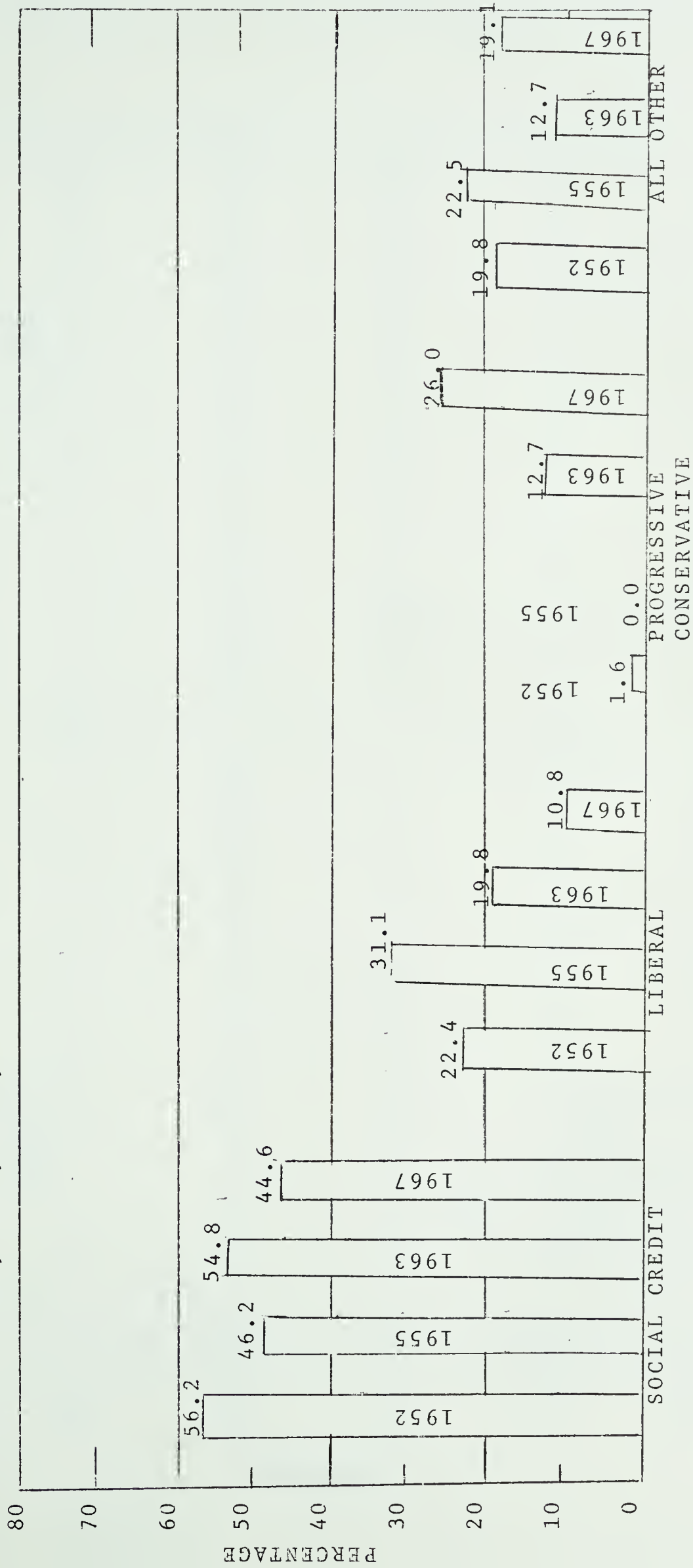
Political Affiliation	1952	1955	1963	1967
TOTAL VOTES POLLED*	298,335	378,179	403,444	498,341
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Social Credit	167,789	175,553	221,107	222,271
Liberal	66,738	117,741	79,709	53,845
Cooperative Common-wealth Federation	41,929	31,180	--	--
	14.1	8.2	--	--
Conservative	6,271	34,757	--	--
Progressive				
Conservative	4,700	--	51,278	129,552
Independent			12.7	26.0
Social Credit	4,203	2,721	3,178	693
Independent Labour	2,927	--	--	--
Labour Progressive	1,132	3,420	--	--
Independent	705	4,225	3,966	6,916
Farmer's Candidate	655	--	--	--
Labour	527	--	--	--
Non-Partisan Labour	463	--	--	--
	0.1	--	--	--
Coalition	--	4,581	2,179	3,654
Liberal Conservative	--	4,001	--	--
	--	1.1	0.5	0.7
Progressive				
Conservative/Liberal	--	--	1,134	--
New Democratic Party	--	--	38,133	79,593
Communist	--	--	527	--
Alberta Unity Movement	--	--	2,233	--
	--	--	0.6	--
Independent Progressive				
Conservative	--	--	--	1,118
Liberal/Progressive Con-servative Coalition	--	--	--	699
	--	--	--	0.1

*Excludes rejected ballots

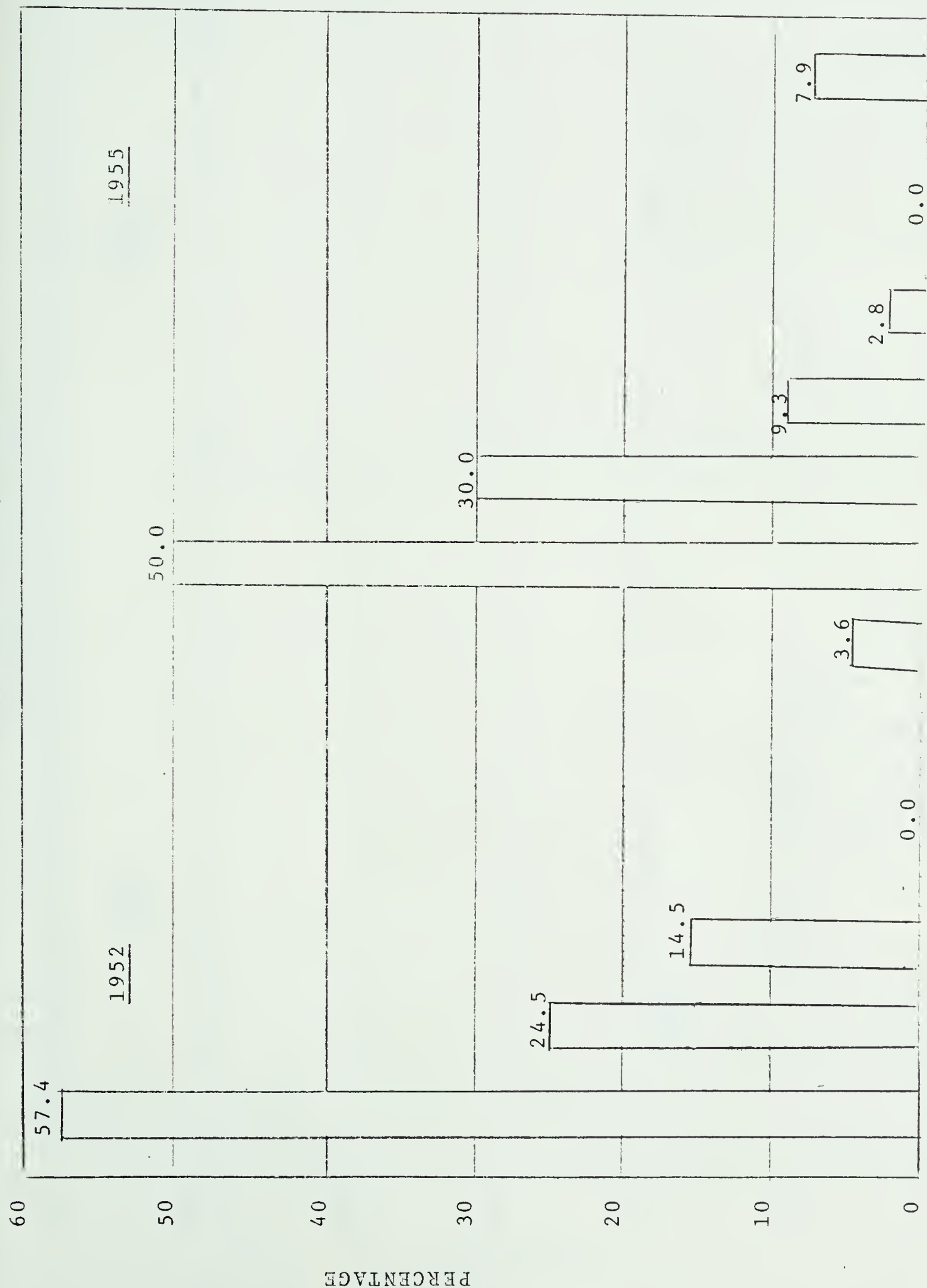
TABLE III-2

VOTING TRENDS
BY SELECTED POLITICAL AFFILIATION

ALBERTA: 1952, 1955, 1963, and 1967

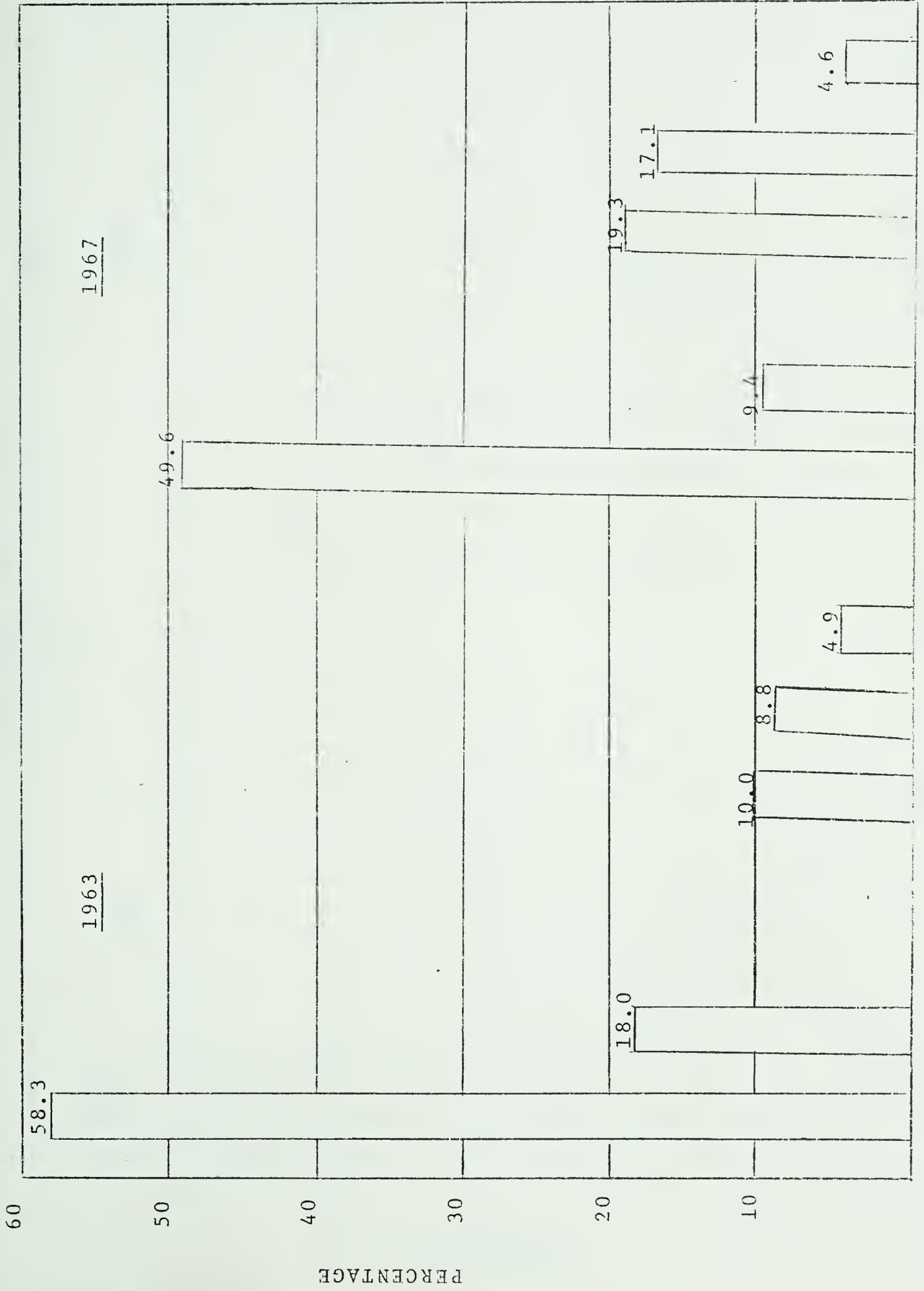


ALBERTA:: 1952, 1955



POPULAR VOICE DISTRIBUTION
BY SELECTED POLITICAL AFFILIATION

ALBERTA: 1963, 1967



S.C. LIB. P.C. N.D.P. OTHER S.C. P.C. C.C.F. OTHER

URBAN VOTE DISTRIBUTION
BY SELECTED POLITICAL AFFILIATION

ALBERTA: 1952, 1955

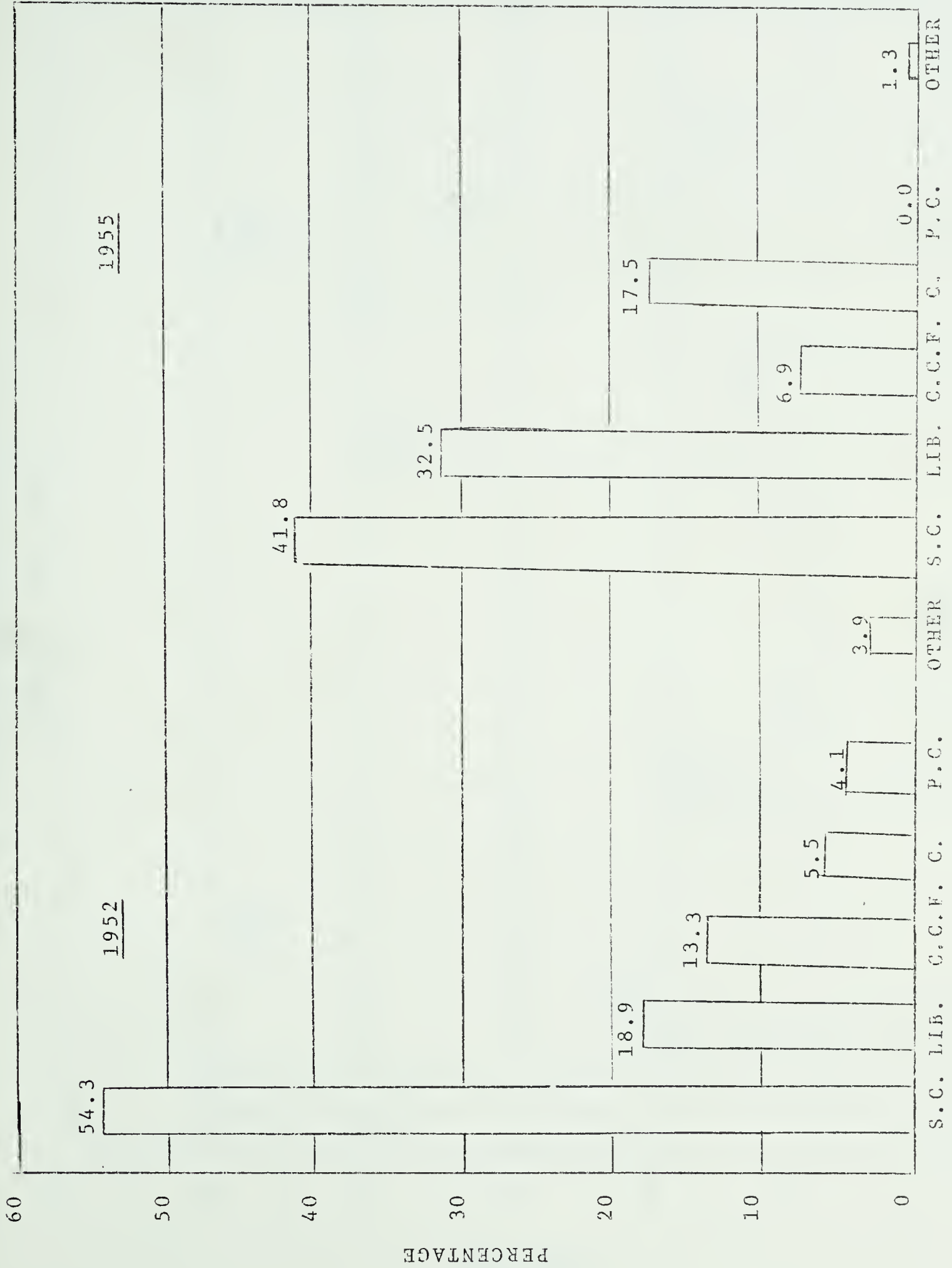
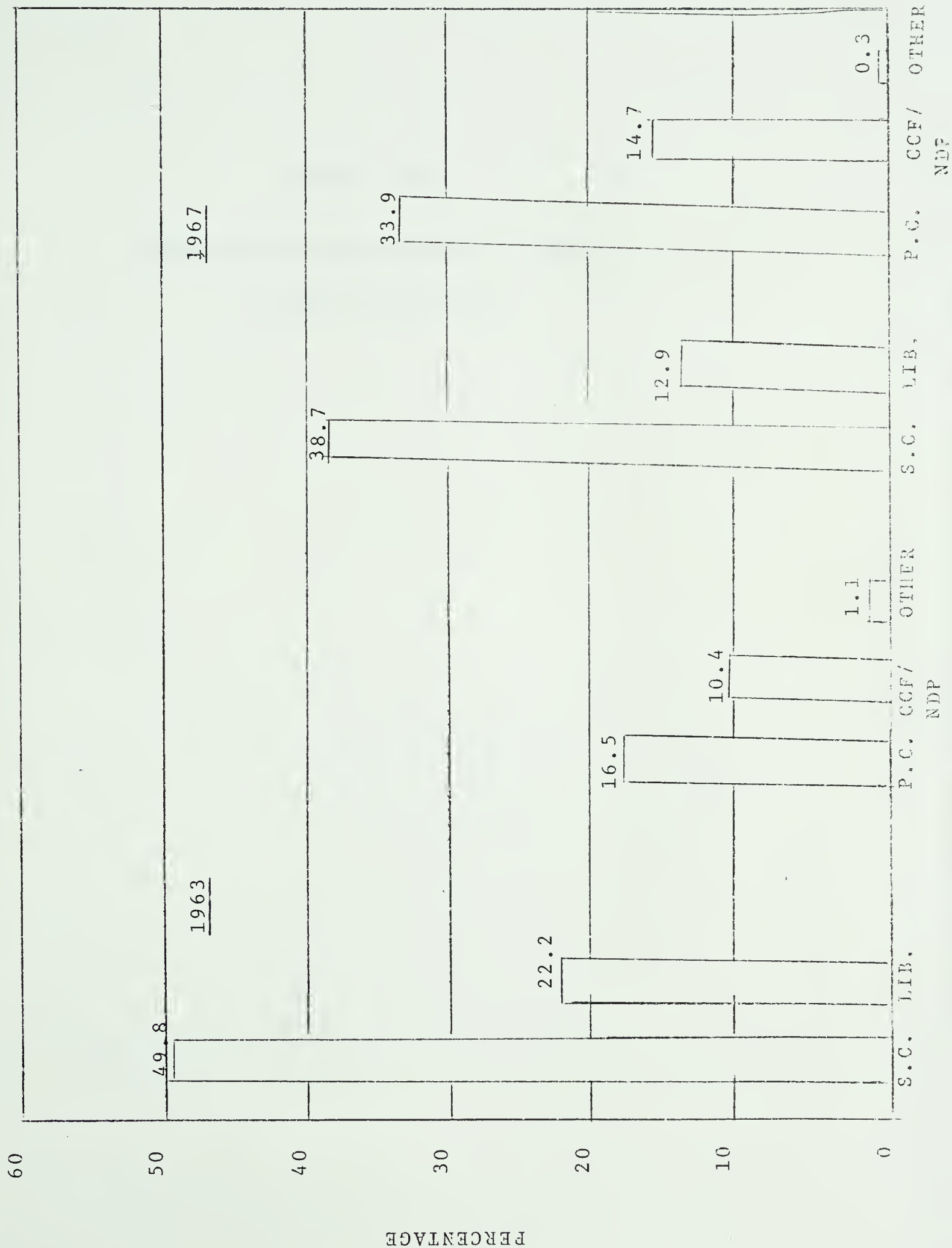


TABLE III-4 CONTINUED
 URBAN VOTE DISTRIBUTION
 BY SELECTED POLITICAL AFFILIATION

ALBERTA: 1963, 1967



CHAPTER FOUR

SURVEYING THE PARTY MEMBERSHIP: DESIGN, SAMPLE AND RESPONSE

4.1 SURVEYS

As was described in chapter three, the Social Credit Party of Alberta came into existence in 1934 as a mass social movement, at once protesting economic, social and political conditions, and proposing radical reforms within the financial and monetary systems in Canada. The movement soon became a political party, won a decisive electoral victory in 1935, and continued to sustain its plurality up to and including the 1967 election.

Some scholarly work has been done on the leadership of the party and the legislation it put forth while in office,¹ as well as various analyses of the ideology of the party, but no work has yet been done about the party members, their activities, and characteristics. As McClosky points out, "political science has devoted considerable attention to the study of political parties, but systematic information is still lacking on many important questions that bear upon the internal life of the party."² One goal of this present analysis is to rectify that situation by focussing on the actual party membership.

There are a number of approaches which might have been used. These include:

- 1) Study of documents (both library research and official documents) and observation of subjects.
- 2) Personal interviews administered to a sample of respondents from the membership.
- 3) Telephone interviews with a sample.

1

The reader may refer to works cited in chapters one to three and also see Michael Sinclair, Reading Reference to Social Credit: A Bibliography (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1962).

2

Herbert McClosky, "Survey Research in Political Science" Survey Research in the Social Sciences, Charles Y. Glock, Editor (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1967), p. 122.

- 4) Mail questionnaire administered to a sample of the membership.³

Each has advantages and disadvantages, and for a given study a number of factors must be considered in making decisions about the kind of survey design which would be of greatest value in understanding the phenomena.

The overall objective was to determine how the membership of the party is similar to, and how it differs from, the Alberta population. It seeks to study participation patterns of the members and their opinions and views on a variety of social issues and political concerns.

The acquisition of new knowledge is a basic task of the student of politics. With new information as a sound base, existing theories can be tested and general theory advanced. The study of political behaviour may often be approached through survey research, a useful and sensitive instrument. Where large numbers are involved, and the student wants to learn something about them, their characteristics, opinions, views, attitudes and so on, survey research is most helpful.

3

A discussion of methods which may be used is found in C.A. Moser Survey Methods in Social Investigation (London: Heinemann, 1958), p. 175.

Survey research focuses on people, the vital facts of people, and their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations, and behaviour.

Field studies are of two broad types: exploratory and hypothesis testing.⁴ The exploratory seeks what is, an attempt to learn what actually exists within a given population. It is an important base for the more systematic and rigorous testing of hypotheses. The potential researcher must ask: Can the study be done with the facilities at the investigator's disposal? Can the variables be measured? Will it cost too much?⁵ With these questions in mind, the writer turned to the question of how to meet the objective: how to design a research project to learn something about the characteristics of the membership of the Alberta Social Credit Party: and to do this within the practical constraints of limited funds.

This required developing profiles of the membership, including demographic participation and opinion profiles.

4

L. Festinger and D. Katz, Research Methods in the Behavioral Sciences (New York: Holt Rinehart, Winston, 1953), p. 75.

5

Fred N. Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), p. 391.

4.2 CHOICE OF DESIGN

Obviously no library, documents, or files contained the demographic and other data necessary for the project. Therefore, some kind of survey research became imperative.

The personal interview method of gathering information is generally the ideal. But given the geographical distribution of the membership of the Alberta Social Credit Party, a wide, largely rural distribution covering hundreds of miles, and the travel and interviewing costs which would be involved in conducting these interviews, personal interviewing was not a feasible undertaking. Consequently, alternate approaches were considered. The amount of information required to learn something substantial about the membership made telephone interviewing unreasonable. It was therefore decided to use the mail questionnaire for the membership sample. Although the author was well aware of the problems involved in such an approach, the obvious major consideration was that of limited resources.⁶

6

As C. A. Moser points out, the information source problem can often be reduced to simple economics. Survey Methods in Social Investigation (London: Heinemann, 1958), p.175. Moser argues that mail questionnaires are especially useful where there is a sizeable geographical spread of the population.

The mail-survey approach⁷ enables one to present a profile of party membership, and determine in what ways the membership is similar to, and in what ways it differs from, the general population. The sample size of seven hundred and fifteen representing an estimated sixty-eight percent of the sample, is also large enough to study, in and of itself, since the sample consists of a fairly large percentage of the membership. That is to say, we could study the findings as a group of active core party members per se. Nonetheless, with the follow-up work which has been done, the data will be presented as representative of the membership. As will become clear, there were opportunities to corroborate the evidence which make this a reasonable proposition.

However, before going into detail about the sample, the questionnaire itself, and a report of the response, some discussion of the benefits and disadvantages of this approach is in order.

7

Postage, printing, coding and related costs make even this approach to information gathering fairly costly.

Moser reviews some disadvantages of this approach:

- 1) the questionnaire must be straightforward
- 2) answers have to be accepted as final
- 3) inappropriate where spontaneous answers are wanted
- 4) answers not independent
- 5) no opportunity for observation to supplement findings.⁸

He also points out that the disadvantages may be overcome by combining it with interviewing and observation, both of which could be done in this study.

Furthermore, in this study, spontaneous answers were not wanted, and answers which are inter-dependent are not only not problematic, but probably helpful in building a profile.

⁸Moser, op.cit., pp.177-178.

Two researchers, Clausen and Ford, state that

It is our belief that one need be neither unscrupulous nor naive to find the mail survey a satisfactory technique for securing attitude data in certain situations ...and for certain problems, the mail technique has decided advantages which outweigh the disadvantages.⁹

The same authors cite wide geographical distribution, elimination of interviewer bias, assurance of anonymity, ability to reach people difficult to reach otherwise, and the care of the individual in making responses, as some of the advantages of the approach. Its disadvantages include lack of close control over response, bias due to non-response, and group response through consultation. But whether the respondent consulted with his spouse or another party member, would not nullify the response.

In follow-up work, careful attention was given to the lack of close control and to possible response bias.

9

John A. Clausen and Robert N. Ford, "Controlling Bias in Mail Questionnaires".
Journal of the American Statistical Association,
Volume 42: December 1947, p. 498.

As to the bias due to non-response, a number of studies have been done to investigate the problem. Schuman and McCandles found that returns are received in the highest proportion from individuals interested in the subjection of the survey, and, in addition, from the better educated.¹⁰ In another study¹¹ it was found that those with a personal interest in the subject tended to respond, as well as a tendency for the less educated to respond less. Baur summarizes his extensive follow-up study by saying that "...the greatest bias was introduced by differences in interest in the subject of the questionnaire."¹²

10

Reported in Journal of the American Statistical Association, op.cit., p. 505.

11

E. Jackson Baur, "Response Bias in a Mail Survey", Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 11, No. 4.

12

Ibid, p. 600.

Kish reports the same findings in Survey Sampling.¹³

From interviews with non-respondents, the impression is that respondents are more likely to be the interested and active portion of membership.

Of course non-response includes, in addition to those with a low or no interest, many other types, such as incapacity to respond (such as inability or illness), lost schedules, and those who never received material in the first place. Kish argues that

Measurement of biases essentially depends on a different method, external to the survey proper....A comparison with an outside source can ascertain only a net bias, the sum of several or all biases of a type.¹⁴

It was with this in mind that some follow-up procedures were developed to determine estimated bias in the data. Although there is some cancelling of bias, there is some non-response, such as lack of interest, which makes generalization to the whole more dangerous than generalization to interested or active or core members of the organization who, it has

13

New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965, p. 547.

14

Ibid, p. 518.

been found, tend to be more willing to respond than others.

The problem of bias in a homogeneous group is lessened since "results from returns from a small proportion of such a group would tend to be more like the whole than is the case when...opinions within the group to be sampled are very different, and such biases as exist are perhaps of no great importance."¹⁵ In other words, bias is lessened if it may be assumed that members of the party are likely to be relatively homogeneous. But, as will become evident in Chapters V to VII, some important cleavages exist within the group.

To get at this problem Hyman suggests the use of criterion data against which the survey data can be compared.¹⁶

15

Clausen and Ford, op.cit., p. 509.

16

Herbert Hyman, Survey Design and Analysis
(Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1960), p. 166.

The most logical would be a comparative survey, but since no others have been done, other criterion checks can be made, some of which are explained later in this section.

Parten outlines measures which can be taken to see who the non-respondents are. One useful approach is a personal interview with a random subsample of non-respondents. The best method is to interview personally a manageable subsample of non-respondents.¹⁷ These replies can then be used to determine the characteristics of the non-respondents. This was done and is reported in Section 4.5. In studying an organization or a party, it may be presumed that those who respond would be most interested and active in the group, and would therefore participate in the study. Finally, a check can be made upon the characteristics of people not replying, including geographical distribution and any other characteristics of the non-respondents.

17

Mildred Parten, Surveys, Polls and Samples: Practical Procedures (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), p. 398.

Another way of validating returns is "to test them against the judgement of experts or persons qualified to know the true situation."¹⁸ It was possible to discuss results obtained with party officials who were in a position to compare the results with their experience.

These, then, are some of the factors which modified the inherent dangers in doing a mail questionnaire. The researcher's personal knowledge of party affairs and connections within and without the party allowed several means of assessing the nature and effect of the inherent problems resulting from the use of a mail questionnaire. These include:

- 1) Opportunities were available to follow up and conduct a number of personal interviews with non-respondents.
- 2) A special numbering of the questionnaires enabled follow up measures to be taken to determine if any areas or particular groups were responding at a rate different from others.
- 3) A personal knowledge of and attendance at hundreds of meetings, seminars, conventions and party activities throughout Alberta serves as one reasonable basis of comparison.
- 4) The returns were carefully tested with a panel of highly qualified persons who had close and long-standing contact with the membership.

Results from this follow up work are presented in Section 4.5.

18

Parten, op.cit., p.492, in Chapter XVI "Evaluation of the Data and Sample".

Given the practical considerations outlined previously, and the opportunity to do follow up field work, it seemed clear that this approach was the best available.

4.3 SAMPLE PROCEDURE

Access to the files and permission to draw the sample is an unusual and generous gesture for any political party, and it is obvious but important to note that the writer could not have proceeded without this co-operation.

In 1967 - 1968, there were approximately twenty-one thousand names in the records of the Social Credit League.¹⁹ As was made clear in Chapter Two, the broader category of party supporters includes those who are not actually members of the League, but support the party in other ways both during and between elections. This study is primarily concerned not with these supporters, or with those who generally vote for the party, but with the contemporary actual party members.

19

Study of Membership Files: Alberta Social Credit League Headquarters, Edmonton.

In each of the then existing sixty-five provincial constituencies, there is a local organization which controls the affairs of the constituency. In addition to the local organizations, the head office is located in Edmonton, and maintains a professional staff.

As will be made clear, there is some limitation in the sampling frame itself; on the other hand, it was and is the only sampling frame available, and its limitations had to be accepted.

The sample itself was stratified by constituencies and in effect sixty-five subsamples were selected. This was done by a systematic selection of ten percent of the names in the files, (every tenth case) with a random start for each of the sixty-five subsamples.

The party has the usual problems in keeping files active and current. The membership lists kept by the party contained many names of those whose membership had lapsed and names of those who had paid for a three or four-year membership some time ago, but had since become inactive and thus disinterested.

Because of this factor, and others, such as the time and cost in keeping full and accurate records, and the practice of not destroying membership cards for a period of time, it is likely that a considerable number of those chosen may well have dropped out of active membership and yet still have received a questionnaire. If we add to this number those people who had either died or were on vacation, on business or in hospitals, and allow for other mobility factors, the total of actual active current members is cut down very considerably.

Thus the real or active membership is less than might be expected. These reasons were the primary factor in drawing such a large sample, two thousand and one hundred, in the first place. The above assumption proved to be well founded; quite a large number were returned by the post office as undeliverable for one reason or another.

4.4 QUESTIONNAIRE PROCEDURES

The objective in designing the questionnaire was to determine 1) how the party membership characteristics differ, both demographically and in attitude, from the general public, to the extent that such knowledge of the general public is available, 2) within the party membership, what the members did as members and why and how they got involved in the party, 3) what members have to say on social issues and 4) what differences there are within the party membership on some of these questions.

The basic objective was to gather the sociological facts about the membership: age, sex, income, education, years in the party, country of birth, occupation, religious affiliation, family size, size of city or town, activity in campaigns, and party work. Other questions such as information source, and reasons given as to how the respondent originally got involved in politics, will help to tell the story as to the type of individual who has been active in the organization. A third set of questions were designed to solicit the opinions of the members about a wide variety of topics, to assist in making up the profile of the membership.

Many of the questions were open-ended to permit observations contradicting as well as supporting the hypotheses advanced.

Most leaders of the party have continually maintained that the party is representative of the whole society of which it is a party, and that it has attracted a general cross-section of Albertans. Therefore, the question of representativeness was investigated.

Some of the other questions were designed to find out what party members do, and how they perceive their activities, in order to build a participation profile. Within the party, we can determine the relationship of key factors such as income, education, and age, with the various questions about specific issues, activities, and voting patterns. An attempt will be made to match opinions and various socio-economic groups.

The question of what attracted people to the party in the first place may be compared with general notions which have been advanced by writers on the party; for example, by Irving.

The questionnaire itself was submitted to a panel of typical respondents, as well as to a panel of experts, to

determine if the language was clear and understandable, and to determine the maximum amount of information which could be obtained without making too great a demand on the respondent's time. The pre-test was extensive; many revisions were made before arriving at the final questionnaire.

All returned questionnaires were coded and this information transferred to computer cards, in preparation for analysis. The technical process of preparing the program and carrying out the operations was done with assistance from both the Political Science Department and the Department of Sociology.

The general process followed was based on Backstrom and Hursh, Survey Research²⁰ which outlines the planning phase, drawing of the sample, determination of sample size, developing of the questionnaire, processing of the data, coding, machine analysis, analysis of data, and reporting.

The questionnaire was mailed to those selected.²¹

20

Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1963.

21

The full questionnaire is included as Appendix A.

Moser argues that best results are obtained when the sponsoring body is connected with the population members.²² Therefore, arrangements were made for a covering letter from the leader of the party and then Premier, Ernest C. Manning, to be included. A note from the President of the Social Credit League, Orvis A. Kennedy, was also included on the first page, encouraging the recipient to participate in the study. An addressed postage-paid envelope was enclosed with each questionnaire. Prior to this, a letter had been sent to all constituency executives to inform them about the project and to request their assistance in ensuring that full co-operation was extended. Three follow-up reminder cards were mailed to all respondents: the first, seven days after the sending of the questionnaire; the second, fifteen days after the original mailing; and the third, three weeks after they had received the questionnaire, requesting that they co-operate by returning the completed questionnaire.²³

22

C. A. Moser, Survey Methods in Social Investigation (London: William Heinemann, 1958), p. 179.

23

This approach is suggested in Parten, op.cit., p. 396.

As to questionnaire formats there are a number of factors to consider in designing a mail questionnaire, one of which is its appearance, since "the impression gained from a hasty glance at the form may determine whether or not an attempt will be made to answer it. The psychological devices for gaining the favorable interest of the recipient, as well as the techniques for sustaining his interest...should be fully considered."²⁴

Parten discusses the importance of appearance, content, length, letter of transmittal, inducements to reply, and mechanics of sending the questionnaires, as well as follow up efforts.²⁵ All of these questions were taken into account and considered in the design and approach used.

24

Parten, p. 384.

25

Parten, Chapter XI.

Stephen and McCarthy²⁶ outline the following variables which affect co-operation in such studies:

- a) the form of approach
- b) the type of information
- c) the affiliations of the respondent
- d) the attitude of the respondent to the organization or individual doing the study, and
- e) efforts made to overcome resistance to such studies

The questionnaire covering letters and follow-up postcards were designed to encourage co-operation, particularly through requests from officers of the respondents' own organization.

26

Frederick F. Stephen and Philip J. McCarthy, Sampling Opinions (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1963), p. 262.

4.5. RESPONSE AND ASSESSMENT

A total of seven hundred and fifteen completed and usable questionnaires were returned.²⁷ Because of the factors mentioned in Section 4.3., particularly the record-keeping methods of the League which included lapsed membership, the actual return rate, although not ascertainable, is considerably higher than a simple unadjusted percentage would indicate. The sample of seven hundred and fifteen is in fact probably quite a substantial percent of those 1) who actually received the material and 2) who were, in fact, current active members at the time.

A cautious estimate would be that one half of those selected would not be regular or active members. Thus, the real return rate would then be in excess of sixty-eight percent of the actual membership sample. This would be a highly conservative estimate of the real return rate.

²⁷ A pure random sample of over 700 would result in a confidence interval of about 3.5%.

The following table (IV-1) lists the sixty-five then existing constituencies, the number of responses from each constituency, and the percentage of the total sample represented by the responses from individual constituencies. It may be seen from this table that the sample represents a good cross-section of many parts of Alberta and is representative of the membership at the time of the study as determined by a study of records. That is, each constituency return is approximate to its actual percentage strength within the total membership.

Therefore, the term membership will be used to describe the findings.

TABLE IV - 1

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLE

Name of Constituency	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Total Sample
Alexandra	10	1.40
Athabasca	14	1.96
Banff-Cochrane	5	0.70
Bonnyville	10	1.39
Bow Valley-Empress	20	2.78
Calgary Bowness	2	0.28
Calgary Centre	3	0.42
Calgary East	6	0.84
Calgary Glenmore	5	0.70
Calgary North	5	0.70
Calgary Queen's Park	3	0.42
Calgary South	5	0.70
Calgary Victoria Park	2	0.28
Calgary West	3	0.42
Camrose	20	2.78
Cardston	18	2.52
Clover Bar	25	3.50
Cypress	13	1.82
Drumheller-Gleichen	7	0.98
Dunvegan	4	0.56
Edmonton Centre	2	0.28
Edmonton Jasper Place	8	1.12
Edmonton North	6	0.84
Edmonton North-East	7	0.98
Edmonton North-West	7	0.98
Edmonton Norwood	3	0.42
Edmonton West	12	1.68
Edmonton Scona Centre	10	1.40
Edmonton Scona East	11	1.54
Edmonton Scona South	8	1.12
Edmonton Scona West	12	1.68

TABLE IV - 1

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLE (Continued)

Name of Constituency	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Total Sample
Edson	20	2.80
Grande Prairie	20	2.80
Grouard	3	0.42
Hand Hills-Acadia	15	2.10
Lac La Biche	5	0.70
Lacombe	4	0.56
Lac Ste. Anne	7	0.98
Leduc	4	0.56
Lethbridge	22	3.08
Little Bow	8	1.12
Macleod	29	4.06
Medicine Hat	6	0.84
Okotoks-High River	6	0.84
Olds-Didsbury	9	1.26
Peace River	16	2.24
Pembina	12	1.68
Pincher-Creek Crowsnest	13	1.82
Ponoka	33	4.62
Redwater	9	1.26
Rocky Mountain House	6	0.84
Sedgewick-Coronation	17	2.38
Spirit River	13	1.82
St. Albert	8	1.12
Stettler	4	0.56
Stony Plain	16	2.24
St. Paul	1	0.14
Taber-Warner	31	4.34
Three Hills	23	3.22
Vegreville-Bruce	9	1.26
Vermilion	5	0.70
Wainwright	5	0.70
Wetaskiwin	11	1.54
Willingdon-Two Hills	20	2.80
Inapplicable	1	0.14
Not Ascertained	23	3.22

In Section 4.2, four factors were outlined, (personal interviews with non-respondents, numbered questionnaires for checks, personal knowledge, and testing with a panel of experts), which modified the inherent dangers in conducting a mail questionnaire. The results of that follow-up work are presented in this section, and all indicate that the results obtained are indeed representative of party members.

Of course, one must judge the extent of the unrepresentativeness, "but such checks can never prove the representativeness of a sample...on this no check is possible, for otherwise there would have been no need for the survey."²⁸ What we can do, however, is look for corroborating evidence.

28

C. A. Moser, Survey Methods in Social Investigation (London: Heinemann, 1958), p. 182.

A small sample of non-respondents (n=40) were interviewed personally. It was found that:

- 1) membership of some had expired, and they were no longer interested. Some of these had joined for a specific nominating meeting to support a friend, and indicated that they had not been interested in the party, beyond that one obligation. This category makes up the largest number of non-respondents. (n=20)
- 2) there were the usual assorted, mixed, miscellaneous reasons as were outlined earlier: questionnaires misplaced, away on holidays, too busy, questionnaires too long to complete, did not think surveys were a good idea. (n=8)
- 3) some said they were in special circumstances and did not want their opinions recorded as they believed they could be too easily identified. One example: a doctor in a small town, who was the only one there, felt that the survey was not anonymous enough and that he could be identified. Another said that he was the only one in his town who earned over \$30,000. and could also be identified. (n=7)
- 4) some indicated that they did not like the idea of putting their personal motivation and opinions in writing, even if unsigned. (n=5)

No specific or general trend was evident in the above sample of non-respondents. As was pointed out in connection with Table IV-1, no geographical bias was found. There is no particularly noticeable pattern among non-respondents, except that the largest group had excluded themselves because they either had expired memberships or were no longer interested in the party.

In a sense their failure to respond is quite acceptable; the objective of the study was to reach current members, and those who had quit are not of interest to this particular study, although others may be interested in studying those who have withdrawn from active participation.

Next, the survey results were presented to a selected and highly qualified panel of persons who had close and long-standing contact with the membership.²⁹ Party leaders felt that the data gave a remarkably accurate picture of current membership.

Finally, the researcher was able to study and interpret the findings in light of personal attendance at party meetings in virtually every single constituency in the Province of Alberta. Based on this long time association, it may be stated that the findings present a fair and reasonable picture of party membership at the time of the field work.

²⁹Personal interviews with Orvis A. Kennedy, past president and Executive Director of the League, and other party officials.

Based on other findings referred to in 4.2., it is probable that respondents are more likely to be those who have a greater interest in the party as compared to non-respondents. Furthermore, respondents are probably those who tend to be active in and concerned about the party. Thus the chances are that the sample is more representative of the core or active membership than it is of the casual or peripheral member.

4.6. COMPARING THE MEMBERSHIP TO THE ELECTORATE

To make comparisons about non-demographic factors, it was possible to draw a sample from the general population and ask respondents a similar series of questions to determine their opinions and approach to issues and problems. To accomplish this, a sample of five hundred was drawn from the general populations of Calgary and Edmonton. Personal interviews were conducted in the two cities, and the sample was drawn from the voters' list for the 1967 election. A total of four hundred and fifty-nine interviews, representing ninety percent of the sample, were obtained. Although this resulted in an

urban sample only, it nonetheless will be possible to compare the party membership with this sample on certain subjects. Where possible other surveys and census data was used for comparative purposes. Another approach could be to compare just urban party members; the membership sample obtained from the two cities, however, makes up less than twenty percent of the membership and therefore was not separated from the rest of the sample.

A new questionnaire had to be designed for the general non-party sample since many of the questions asked of party members were irrelevant to the general population. This opportunity was used to gather other kinds of information about political participation, interest in politics, and opinions about politics, politicians, the non-voter and other questions which go beyond those required for this dissertation, but which can be utilized for other purposes. Where questions were repeated, they can be compared. A complete questionnaire is included as Appendix B.

CHAPTER V

THE ALBERTA SOCIAL CREDIT LEAGUE: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ALBERTA SOCIAL CREDIT LEAGUE:

MEMBERSHIP DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The findings of the survey research will be presented in this and the following two chapters. The sample of seven hundred and fifteen, as outlined in detail in chapter four, represents a geographical distribution remarkably similar to actual League membership records; that is, the percentage of respondents from each constituency represents an accurate reflection of actual party membership.

5.1 GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The following table summarizes the percentage of members from the various areas in Alberta. Table V - 1 is based on a question which specifically shows which area (city, town, village, or rural district) the respondent lived in, and this data is represented in a summary form in the following table.

TABLE V - 1
GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Area Respondents were from ^a	Percentage of Exact	Membership Summary	Percentage of Alberta Adult Population in 1966 ^b
Small towns and villages	38.74)	74	44
Rural Areas	35.66)		
Calgary and Edmonton	19.18	18	50
Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Grande Prairie	5.17	5	6
Not ascertained	2.24		
Chi square 239 d.f. 2 P=<.01			

Source: For all membership tables throughout: original tabulation, for all Alberta population comparisons, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, and Atlas of Alberta figures used, unless otherwise specified.

Membership n = 715 throughout, unless otherwise specified.

a

For a complete geographical breakdown of the sample, refer to table IV - 1.

b

The reader may wish to note that for this table, and for tables V-4, V-6, V-11, and V-16, some categories used in the original Dominion Bureau of Statistics and Atlas of Alberta tables have been combined into one category by the author for purposes of ease of comparison.

The most notable fact about the geographical distribution of the sample is the strength in small towns, villages, rural non-farm and farm areas. While as was noted in chapter four, the smaller cities in the Province are well represented as constituencies, many of those who live in those constituencies apparently reside in surrounding rural areas.

Table V - 2 was designed to find the respondent's own perception of the kind of neighborhood he lived in.

TABLE V - 2
TYPE OF NEIGHBORHOOD

Type of Neighborhood ^a	Percentage of Membership
Rural	46.71
Suburban-residential	35.24
Residential-commercial	11.75
Residential-industrial	3.22
Don't know	0.14
Not ascertained	2.94

^a

This subjective classification was used in the questionnaire, but no exact comparison can be made with the Alberta population; an approximate comparison is discussed in the text.

Rural areas of course include small towns and villages as well as farms.

The first and most obvious fact about the distribution of the membership is the distinct difference in geographical party strength as compared to the Alberta population. Edmonton and Calgary, Alberta's two largest cities, together make up approximately one-half of Alberta's total population. But the combined Edmonton and Calgary portion of the membership sample amounts to only 18.18%. This then means that the membership comes disproportionately from other areas of the province. Now if the membership of Alberta's other cities is considered, it may be noted that the percentage of the sample is very close to approximately the percentage of Alberta's population which in fact live in the cities of Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Red Deer, and Grande Prairie. Thus the membership is lower in the two large cities, representative numerically in other smaller cities, and higher in small cities such as Camrose, Drumheller, Wetaskiwin and Edson as well as higher in towns, villages, and rural areas. Macleod, a small southern

town of approximately three thousand is a good example -- while it has much less than one percent of Alberta's population, it nevertheless represents four percent of the membership sample.

The example of Fort Macleod raises another dimension, that of north-south differences. The percentage of the sample is generally higher in Southern Alberta than in other areas. Taber-Warner and Bow Valley-Empress are examples. The notable factor, however, remains the lack of party membership in the two large cities, and the strong support in the smaller cities, towns, and rural constituencies. Alberta's total population is shifting steadily toward the cities, both in internal migration and through immigration. And although one-half of the population now resides in Edmonton and Calgary, only twenty percent of the party membership comes from the two cities. The hypothesis that the party is largely rural based is therefore partially confirmed by these findings.

5.2 SEX OF MEMBERSHIP

TABLE V - 3
SEX OF MEMBERSHIP

Sex	Percentage of Membership	Alberta Population in 1961
Men	62.38	51.70
Women	36.50	48.30
Not ascertained	1.12	
Chi square = 33 d.f. = 1 p = < .01		

Although the situation is very gradually changing, Alberta's population has traditionally been composed of more males than females. In 1951, males outnumbered females by 110 to 100; by 1961, this had been reduced to 107 to 100¹. In the membership sample, men outnumber women by about 10 to 6, clearly outnumbering women as compared to the population as

1

Population distribution, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, (1961).

a whole. This finding is surprising, not because women are outnumbered, but because given the traditional roles assumed by men in politics, there is such a large percentage of women in the membership. Nonetheless, Milbrath's proposition that men are more likely to participate in politics than women is true for participation in the party.

The next category of interest is the distribution of the membership sample by age.^{1a} Table V - 4 discloses age distribution.

1a

The reader should keep in mind when reading table V-4 that one should not expect and rarely finds people active in a party in the age group 15-21. They are included only because for the party being studied members may at that age, join the Young People's section. The effect of including this group is to greatly inflate the chi square since such a large percentage of the general population is in that age group. Thus, this age category difference should not be exaggerated.

5.3 AGE DISTRIBUTION

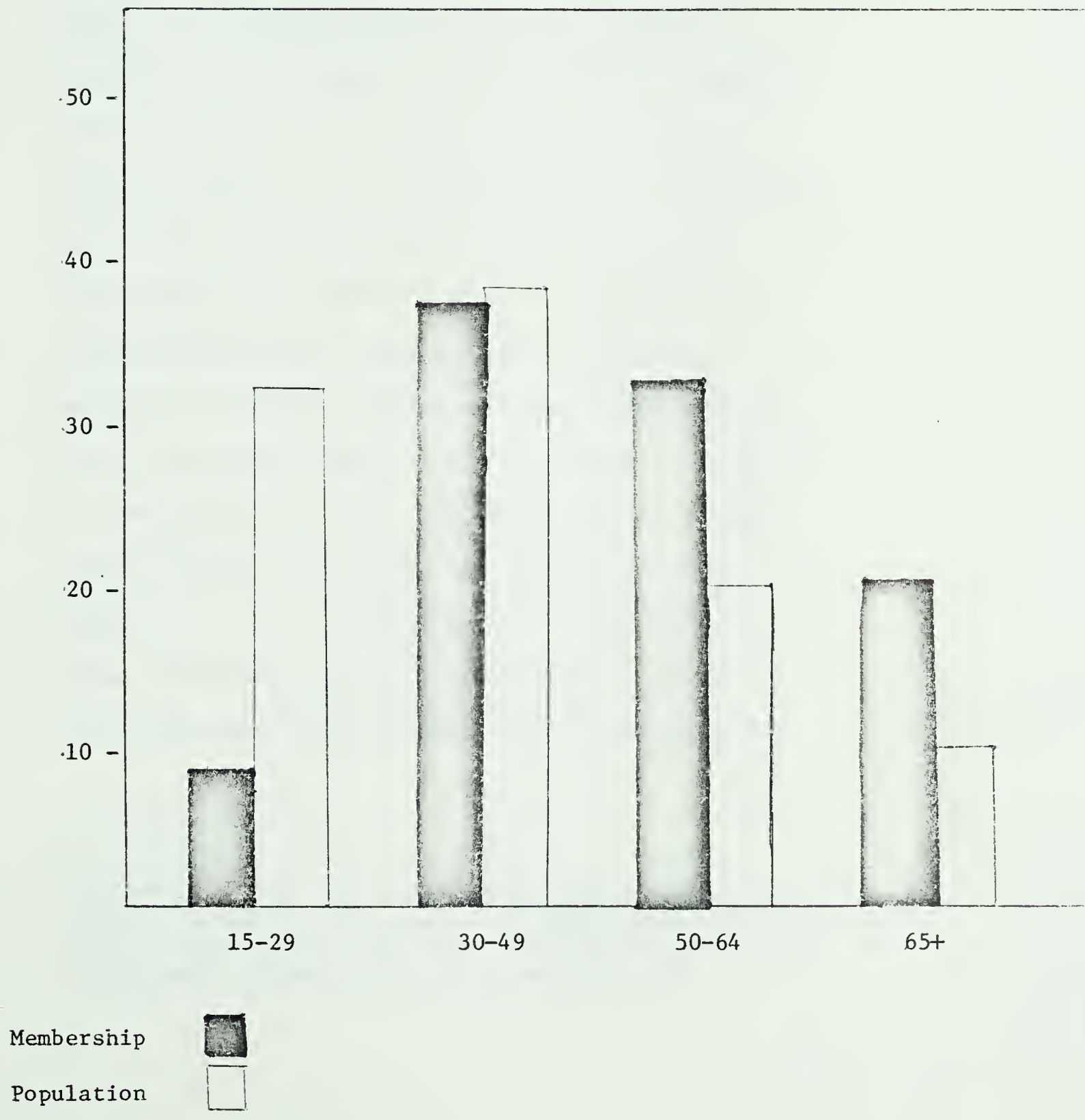
TABLE V - 4
AGE DISTRIBUTION OF MEMBERSHIP

Age Group	Percentage of Membership	Percentage of Population 15 Years and above.
15 - 29	7.83	32
30 - 49	37.62	38
50 - 64	32.45	20
65 +	20.70	10
Not ascertained and inapplicable answers	1.12	

Chi square = 271 d.f. = 3 p = $< .01$

The age comparison may be viewed generally as shown in the following table.

TABLE V - 5
AGE GRAPH



The age categories were selected to begin at age fifteen since that is the age at which young people may become members of the Alberta Social Credit League. If we combine the first two age categories, it may be seen that about eight percent of the membership is under the age of thirty. Now this cannot be directly compared to the age distribution of the Alberta population, since, according to the 1966 figures,² about thirty-five percent of Alberta's population was under fifteen years of age, and about twenty-two of the total was between fifteen and twenty-nine years of age. If the group below the age of fifteen are excluded for comparative purposes, then almost one out of every three Albertans falls in the age category of fifteen to twenty-nine. But only eight percent of the membership comes from that age group, indicating quite clearly that young people are not represented in the party in

2

Population by Age Group, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, figures quoted in this section are based on the 1966 data. Actual figures needed were not available, but they were determined arithmetically using available data.

in proportion to their numbers in the Alberta population.

Over thirty-seven percent of the sample, the modal response, are in the 30 - 49 age category, and approximately thirty-eight percent (again excluding those under fifteen) are in this middle age category in the Alberta population. The middle age group then makes up the main group in the sample. It is this age group which one might expect to be quite active, politically.

The 50 - 64 age group accounts for about one-third of the sample; but in the total population this age group accounts for only about one-fifth.

Finally, twenty percent of the members are in the sixty-five and over category, but in the total Alberta population (those fifteen and over), only about ten percent were sixty-five and older.

The age distribution of the membership as compared to the Alberta population is quite clear; younger

people are under-represented. Those over sixty-five, on the other end of the age scale, are greatly over-represented. As was evident in chapter two, the supporters of the early Social Credit movement were staunch, and they have remained committed to the party for many years.

If we look at the changes which took place in Alberta's total population in the 1960's, it may be observed that the biggest change which took place was in the 15 - 19 age group, a group which would soon be of voting age. Between 1961 and 1966, this group increased by sixty-seven percent in the urban areas.³ The party demonstrates a remarkable ability to hold existing members, but experiences difficulty in recruiting young members.

3

Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1966, percentage change in population by age group.

The null hypothesis that there is no difference between the population and the membership for the age variable is rejected and hence the evidence supports the hypothesis that the party appeals primarily to older people, and lacks support among the young. Also Milbrath's hypothesis that "young people are not likely to become enmeshed in politics until they have become established in a job, with a home, and start to raise a family"⁴ is true for the Social Credit Party participation. It is also true that for the Party, participation rises with age, but unlike the more common curvilinear relationship, it apparently does not decline for those over sixty-five. Many of those in this group reported a great deal of campaign and other party activities.

⁴Milbrath, op.cit., p. 133.

5.4 OCCUPATION

The occupation of the respondents was of interest in determining which major occupational groups were represented, and as one of the variables in building a membership profile.

Table V - 6 outlines the occupation of respondents.

TABLE V - 6
MEMBERSHIP OCCUPATION

Occupation of respondent	Percentage of membership	Some approximate Alberta population comparisons ^a
Professional	7.83	9.6
White Collar	10.77	20.0
Skilled Workman	7.27	) 33.0
Unskilled Workman	3.64)
Farmer	23.92	20.0
Housewife	26.15	
Other	14.97	14.0
Business Manager, Proprietor	3.92	4.0
Not ascertainable	1.12	
Inapplicable	0.42	

^a The reader should note that the categories in this column are for head of household occupations, thus no housewife category is present for comparative purposes and no test of fitness can be done. The comparison is not precise.

The first item of interest is the fact that almost three-quarters of the women respondents are housewives. Only about one-quarter classified themselves as other than housewives. The next clear statement that can be made about the respondents is the fact that close to twenty-five percent of the total membership are farmers. As in respect to age, it is difficult to compare this directly with the Alberta population, of which about twenty percent is engaged in the agricultural industry.⁵ However, if we exclude women from the membership sample, the percentage of farmers increases to almost one-third. Thus, the party has considerable over-representation of agriculture in comparison to other sectors of the Alberta economy. Milbrath's hypothesis that farmers are less likely to become active than city dwellers is rejected as far as participation in the Social Credit Party is concerned.⁶

5

Atlas of Alberta, (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1969), p.63.

6

Milbrath, op.cit., p.128.

The unskilled and skilled workmen categories make up about eleven percent of the sample; but in the Alberta population, approximately one-third are in these categories (including construction manufacturing, and mining activities).⁷ Another twenty percent of the Alberta population is employed in the service, finance and similar fields,⁸ the equivalent of the white collar category in the table. The professional and managerial class, about twelve per cent of the membership probably is proportional in numbers to the population as a whole, and although the data is not directly comparable, these groups probably make up a larger percentage of the sample than they do in the general population.

The occupation of the spouse of the respondent was also determined and is presented in Table V - 7.

7

Combining these categories from market data in The Financial Post, 1968-69, Survey of Markets (Toronto: Maclean-Hunter, 1969).

8

Atlas of Alberta, op.cit., p. 62, most percentages quoted are approximate. No useful purpose would be served by having decimal places in most cases.

TABLE V - 7
OCCUPATION OF SPOUSE OF RESPONDENT

Occupation of Respondent's Spouse	Percentage of Membership
Professional	6.29
White Collar	7.69
Skilled Workman	3.50
Unskilled Workman	1.68
Farmer	11.19
Housewife	39.86
Other	10.07
Business Manager, Proprietor	2.38
Not ascertained	7.69
Inapplicable	9.65

Thus two-thirds of the male respondents indicated that their spouses were housewives, and most of the rest (both men and women) were professional, white collar or farmer.

5.5 RESIDENCY LENGTH AND MEMBERSHIP LENGTH

Table V - 8 indicates the length of time the respondents have resided in Alberta.

TABLE V - 8
LENGTH OF RESIDENCY IN ALBERTA

Years Resided in Alberta	Percentage of Membership
Less than 10 years	2.52
10 to 20 years	5.59
20 to 40 years	32.41
Over 40 years	54.97
Not Ascertained	1.68
Inapplicable	0.14
Other	2.80

A huge majority of the membership consists of long-time residents. From 1951 - 1961, when Alberta experienced a net migration of well over ten percent of the population

and a total population increase of over forty percent,⁹ few new members were recruited to the party; only about eight percent of the members indicated taking up residence in Alberta during that period. Milbrath's hypothesis that "the longer a person resides in a given community, the greater is the likelihood of his participation is true for participation in the party."¹⁰

9
Atlas of Alberta, op.cit., p. 54.

10
Milbrath, op.cit., p. 133.

TABLE V - 9
LENGTH OF PARTY MEMBERSHIP

Length of Residency	Percentage of Membership
Less than 6 months	0.70
6 months to 1 year	14.97
1 year to 5 years	27.83
5 years to 10 years	13.57
10 years to 20 years	15.80
20 years and over	23.92
Don't know	0.0
Not ascertained	3.22
Inapplicable	0.0

Here, there is a bi-modal distribution: most of the membership had been members for between one to five years; and the second most common group consisted of those who had been members for more than twenty years. The over-all distribution, however, indicates a fairly even time spread for length of membership. Probably the

most important factor in tables eight and nine is the fact that very few new residents either from other parts of Canada or from other countries have been recruited into the party.

The hypothesis that people most strongly committed to Social Credit are those who were first attracted to it in the 1930's seems to be largely confirmed by these responses.

5.6 EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Table V - 10 was included both to get a subjective response from the respondents as to educational attainment, and to prepare respondents for the question from which Table V - 11 was prepared, the formal educational levels of the party membership. A third question on education was included to determine how many people in the sample had vocational training in addition to formal schooling. All three tables are presented for joint analysis.

TABLE V - 10
SUBJECTIVE EVALUATION OF EDUCATION

Do you feel you have had enough education?	Percentage of Membership
Yes	35.66
No	50.77
Don't Know	5.59
Not ascertained	7.13
Inapplicable	0.70
Other	0.14

TABLE V - 11
EDUCATION LEVEL OF MEMBERSHIP

Education level of Respondents	Percentage of Exact	Membership Summary	Population 1961 Census
Less than Grade 8	12.45)		
	)	34.13	37.6
Grade 8	21.68)		
Some High School	31.47)		
	)	49.93	53.1
Grade 12	18.46)		
Some University	7.55)		
)		
University	4.48)	13.45	9.0
)		
Post-Graduate Degree	1.12)		
Not ascertained	2.52		
Inapplicable	0.14		
Other	0.14		

Chi square = 33 d.f. = 2 p = $\leq .01$

TABLE V - 12
FURTHER BUSINESS - VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Training of Respondents	Percentage of Membership
Yes	20.14
No	77.76
Not ascertained	1.68
Inapplicable	0.28
Other	0.14

To begin with, in the membership, 13.45 percent have some university education or higher (this includes some university, university graduation, and post-graduate work). This compares with approximately nine percent of the general population,¹¹ made up of about four percent university graduates and about five percent with some university training. Almost exactly fifty percent of the membership had

¹¹

Schooling for population over 15 years old, Dominion Bureau of Statistics; all figures rounded off to next highest percentage for ease in comparing sample and general population.

either some high school or high school completion. This is similar to the Alberta population as a whole; approximately fifty-nine percent have one to five years of high school (excluding those below the age of fifteen). About thirty-four percent of the membership have grade eight or less education' this compares to 37.6% of the total population. It should be kept in mind that about three percent of the membership is not accounted for. In summary, however, the lower education levels are very similar for both population and membership; the middle range of the general population is slightly better educated than the membership; while the membership has a higher percentage of those with higher education than the general population. One would think those of higher educational level would participate to a greater extent in politics; similarly one would expect those with lower educational levels to participate less. This is the case in the membership only for those with a higher level since the percentage of those in the lower levels make up a proportion of the membership similar to the total population.

Milbrath's finding that those with higher education are more likely to participate¹² does not hold true for membership in the party, although it still of course may hold true generally.

5.7 INCOME

The next characteristic to be examined involves annual income. The question was designed to determine family income rather than individual incomes.

12

Milbrath, op.cit., p. 122.

TABLE V - 13

INCOME LEVELS (FAMILY OF MEMBERSHIP)

Income of Family	Percentage of Respondents	Alberta Population (approximates)
Under \$3000.	17.06	20
\$3000. to \$4999.	23.22	30
\$5000. to \$6999.	18.18	25
\$7000. to \$9999.	14.27	15
\$10,000. to \$14,999.	13.01	9
\$15,000. to \$30,000.	5.59	(
Over \$30,000.	0.14	(1
Don't know	0.14	(
Not ascertained	7.69	
Inapplicable	0.70	
(Adjusted)	Chi square = 89.88	d.f. = 4 p = < .01

Seventeen percent of the membership reported family incomes of under \$3000., a high percentage of membership participation by lower income group. Approximately twenty percent of Alberta families fell into that category.¹³

13

Families by size of total income, from Dominion Bureau of Statistics, and Atlas of Alberta, op.cit., p. 64.

At the other end of the scale, nine percent of all Alberta families earned in excess of \$10,000. Over eighteen percent of the party members had family incomes in excess of \$10,000.

In the \$3000. and \$5000. categories, we find twenty-three percent of the membership, but a little over thirty percent of the general population. Twenty-five percent of the general Alberta families fall in the \$5000. to \$7000. range, and eighteen percent of the members have incomes between \$7000. and \$10,000., and fifteen percent of all Alberta families have a similar income; for this income group, the sample is very similar to the population at large. The implications of the breakdown for income and other major characteristics will be discussed later.

Thus while the table clearly indicates some differences between the membership and the general electorate, especially in that higher income groups are slightly over-represented¹⁴ the important point to note is that considerable representation of lower income groups in the party is indicated.

14

Income is usually correlated with political participation as reported by Milbrath, op.cit., p. 120.

5.8 ORIGIN AND ETHNIC GROUP

Table V - 14 serves to indicate the percentage of native-born Canadians in the membership, Table V - 15 the country of birth for non-native members, and Table V - 16 the ethnic origin of members. These three related tables are presented in this section.

TABLE V - 14
NATIVE BORN CANADIANS IN MEMBERSHIP

Origin of Respondents	Percentage of Membership	Alberta Population
Yes	69.65	78.3
No	29.51	21.7
Not ascertained and inapplicable answers	.84	
Chi square = 27 d.f. = 1 p = < .01		

The membership has a higher population of individuals from outside of Canada than is found in the Alberta population as a whole.

The next table indicates country or area for those who answered the previous question negatively.

TABLE V - 15

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN FOR MEMBERS BORN OUTSIDE CANADA

Country of Birth	Percentage of Membership (including only those born outside Canada)		Alberta Population (including only those born outside Canada)
	Detail	Summary	
United States of America	36	36	18
U.K., New Zeland, Australia	27	27	27
Europe	21	Others: 37	Others: 55
USSR, Eastern Europe	11		
Orient	1		
Other	1		
Not Ascertained	3		

Membership n=214

Chi square = 51 d.f. = 2 p = < .01

The party attracted a higher percentage of those born in the United States than would be representative of the Alberta population. The third table in this section shows the ethnic composition of the membership.

TABLE V - 16
ETHNIC GROUP/NATIONALITY GROUP

Ancestors/Descendants	Percentage of Membership	Percentage of Alberta population
British	53.99	45.2
Europe, (Germany, Ukrainian, Scandinavia, Netherlands, Poland, others)	33.99	44.4
French	2.24	6.3
Not ascertained	7.83	
Others and inapplicable	1.96	

(Adjusted) Chi square = 64 d.f. = 2 p = <.01

The total British origin among all Albertans is 45.2%¹⁵ while the membership consists of just over fifty percent.

15

Atlas of Alberta, op.cit., p. 58. The Financial Post Survey of Markets puts the figure at 45.2%

Among all Albertans, those of European origin (and this includes German, Ukrainian, Scandinavian, Netherlands, Polish, and Russian), total approximately 43% while in the membership, 33.99% categorize themselves in the above ethnic groups, summarized in the tables as European.

Approximately 6.3% of all Albertans are of French origin, whereas in the membership, 2.24% state their ethnic origin as French. There was insufficient Indians or Eskimos in the membership to create a category. This group totals approximately two percent of the Alberta population.¹⁶

5.9 RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

Table V - 17 serves to give an indication of church attendance among party members.

16

Financial Post, Survey of Markets, p. 79.

TABLE VI - 17
CHURCH ATTENDANCE OF MEMBERSHIP AND
POPULATION

Attendance at Church	Percentage of Membership Exact	Membership Summary	HRRC Sample Percentage ¹⁷
More than once a week	24.76)	51.33	18
Once a week	26.57)		
Once a month	16.78)	43.35	11
Less than once a month	26.57)		
Other	0.14		
Not ascertained and inapplicable answer			
Never	1.12	1.12	59

(Adjusted to include 3 categories only) chi square = > 100

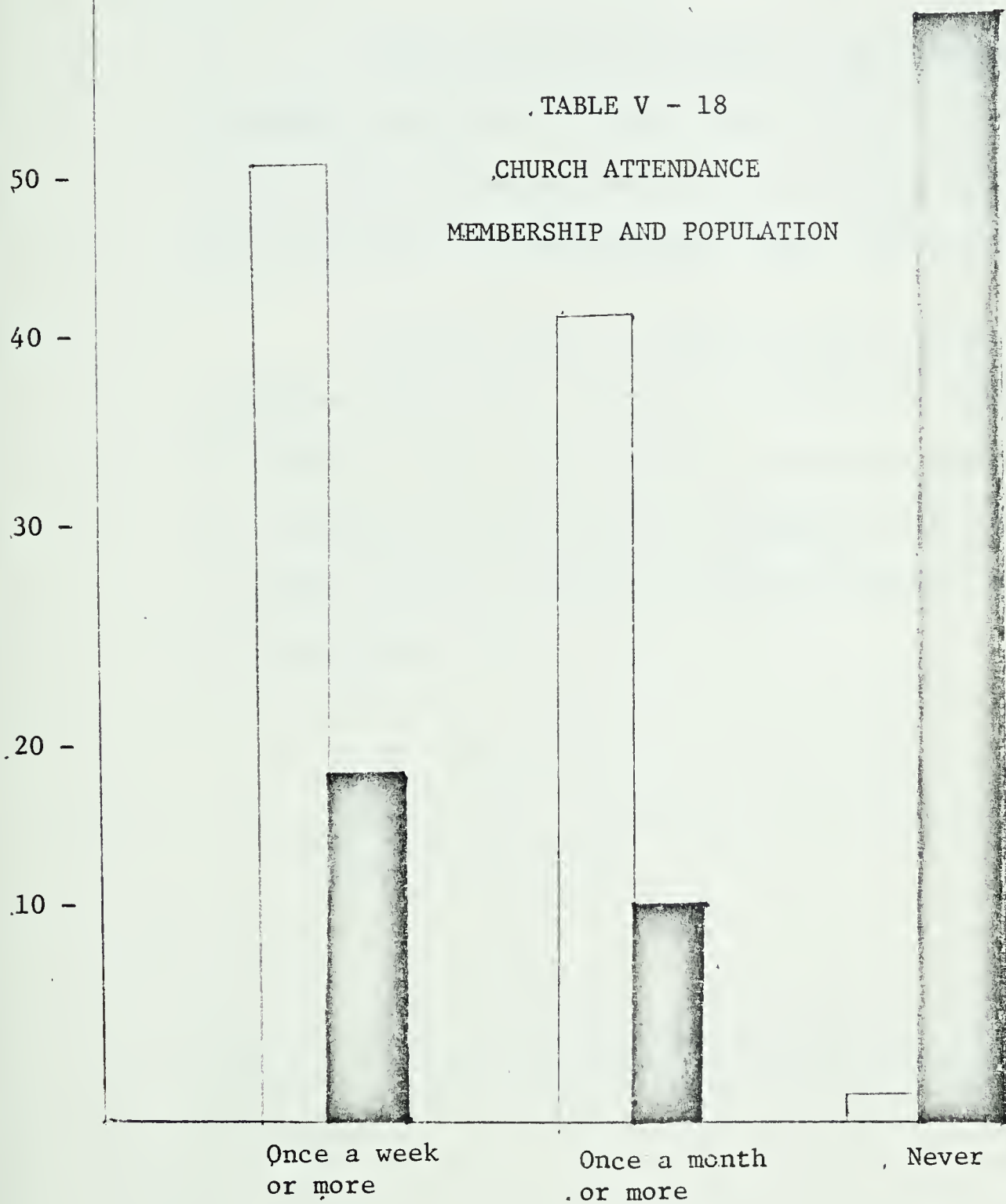
d.f. = 2 p = < .01


¹⁷


Thirteen percent of this sample reported no religious affiliation and so cannot be included in the table.

HRRC: Government of Alberta "Survey of Edmonton and Calgary", Inform, November 17, 1971.

Graphically, church attendance looks as follows:



Membership 

Population 

Thus, we have over one-half of the membership attending church once or more a week, and over one-half of the Calgary-Edmonton sample never attending church. Only one percent of the membership never attend church.

The next item of interest concerns actual religious affiliation, and this is outlined in Table V - 19. In addition to the great contrast between the membership and the public vis-a-vis church attendance, the affiliation of members differs from the population of Alberta in the following ways:

More than fifty percent of the members attend church once or more a week, two-thirds of them attend once a month or more; only one-quarter attends less than once a month. Here is clearly a distinct difference from the general population; we find much closer church affiliations than we do among the general public.

A study done in Calgary and Edmonton provides an interesting contrast to the members.

The concept of Alberta as being the 'Bible Belt' of Canada appears somewhat shaky if the evidence of Calgary and Edmonton is taken as an indicator. About thirteen percent of those surveyed claimed no religious affiliation. In the four weeks prior to the survey, close to sixty percent reported they did not attend church at all, eleven percent reported attending once, and eighteen percent attended four or more times....immigrants are twice as religious-minded as Albertans, who attend church the least.¹⁸

18

Human Resources Research Council, Government of Alberta, "Survey of Edmonton and Calgary", reported in Inform, November 17, 1971, published by the Government of Alberta, p. 3.

TABLE V - 19
RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Members of Churches	Percentage of Membership	Percentage of Alberta Population
Anglican and United Church	29.09	44.0
Roman Catholic	9.93	25.0
Lutheran	8.00	9.0
Other Protestants	22.77	14.0
Baptist and Brethren	6.99	3.6
Latter Day Saints (Mormon)	5.59	2.0
Pentecostal, Church of God	3.92	
Others (Hindu, Jewish, etc.)	1.12	3.6
Not ascertained	9.79	
Inapplicable	2.80	
(Adjusted) Chi square = > 100 d.f. = 6 Significant at less than .01		

About forty-four percent of Albertans are affiliated with either the United Church of Canada (thirty-two percent), or the Anglican Church (twelve percent). In the membership twenty-nine percent are so affiliated, although this figure is not directly comparable because some of the respondents

listed themselves merely as Protestant and therefore may be listed in the next category which includes Presbyterian and other similar Protestant churches. The twenty-nine percent figure is therefore somewhat low, and the next figure is somewhat inflated. About thirty percent of the members are other Protestant religions, not specifically listed in other categories, (Lutheran, Presbyterian, Unitarian, and a number of smaller Protestant churches). The comparable figures among the general Alberta population is about twenty-three percent.

Approximately twenty-five percent of Albertans are affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁹ The membership, however, has only ten percent Roman Catholics. Lutherans, a sub-category included in "other Protestant" make up eight percent of party members; among all Albertans, Lutherans account for 9.2%. Baptist and related churches account for four percent of Albertans; among the membership, this group accounts for 10.91%.

19

Religious affiliation percentages compiled from Atlas of Alberta, op.cit., p. 59.

Mormons make up six percent of the party compared to two percent of the Alberta population. The Pentacostal and similar affiliated churches account for one percent of Albertans, and four percent of the party membership.

Again, it should be noted that about ten percent of the membership would not disclose affiliation or preference and therefore some of the above figures are probably low.

Greek Orthodox, and Ukrainian Catholic although making up over five percent of Alberta's population do not have sufficient numbers to make a separate category in the party membership.

The religious affiliation may be summed up as follows: The United, Anglican, Presbyterian, and other Protestant religions are found among the membership in a pattern similar to that found among all Albertans, although there are less United Church and Anglican members as a percentage and more "other Protestant" sects represented in the membership than there are as a percentage of the total population. Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox

and Ukrainian Catholics are more numerous as a percentage of the Alberta population than they are as a percentage of membership. By contrast however, Baptist, Mormon, and Pentecostal religions form a greater portion of the sample than they do among the total Alberta population. If we add Baptists, Evangelicals, Mormons, Pentecostals, and some other fundamentalist protestants together, it may be estimated that close to one-third of the members are in this group, compared to an estimated fifteen percent of the Alberta population.

The general impression of the party as being composed primarily of fundamentalist Protestants is not the case. But it can be said that these groups are over-represented compared to their incidence in the general population.

There is evidence that the hypothesis that the party is closely associated with religious adherents is confirmed if church attendance and membership is accepted as a reasonable indicator.

The general trends in Alberta toward urbanization and secularization have clear implications for the party as a whole and serve to contrast the party membership and the

Albertan society. Although Alberta has changed not only in urbanization and secularization, but has been affected by inter-provincial migration and changing values among the young, these changes do not seem to have changed the make-up of the party membership, and, at the time of the study, had not greatly influenced its direction.

5.10 FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS AND HOME OWNERSHIP

Table V - 20 outlines marital and family characteristics of the League membership.

TABLE V - 20

FAMILY SIZE

Number in Family	Percentage of Membership
Single	8.39
Married without children	5.87
Married with 1-2 children	25.59
Married with 3-5 children	46.43
Married with more than 5 children	10.63
Not ascertained	2.52
Other	0.56

The membership is found to be overwhelmingly the married with children categories, and average family size greatly exceeds Alberta's average family size of 3.9 (3.8 for urban families and 4.2 for rural families).²⁰ Most families

in the membership exceed five in number. Very few of the membership are single. Milbrath's proposition that "married persons are more likely to participate in politics than single persons" is thus confirmed.²¹

The next table V - 21 indicates the number of families who own their own home.

TABLE V - 21
ACCOMMODATION, OWNED OR RENTED

Accommodation, owned or rented	Percentage of Membership
Own	84.06
Rented	9.79
Other	0.56
Inapplicable	2.24
Not ascertained	3.36

²¹

Milbrath, op.cit., p. 134.

In Alberta as a whole, 71.5% of dwellings are owner-occupied and 28.5% are tenant-occupied.²² There is a distinct difference in this instance between party members and the Alberta population since almost three times as many people in the general population rent their accommodation as do those in the party. The hypothesis that "homeowners are more likely to participate than renters"²³ is thus confirmed for the party.

The next table shows the type of accommodation the party members occupy.

TABLE V - 22
TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION

Type of Accommodation	Percentage of Membership
House	53.71
Farm	35.52
Suite	3.22
Other	2.80
Not ascertained	3.78
Inapplicable	0.98

²² Compiled from data in The Financial Post, Survey of Markets, 1968/69, op.cit., p. 80, estimates for 1967.

²³ Milbrath, op.cit., p. 133.

For Alberta as a whole, the number of families living on farms is eighteen percent, and the total number of rural families is twenty-nine percent (including farm and non-farm families).²⁴

Table V - 22 concludes the demographic profile of the membership. As has been noted in chapter four, no direct comparison can be made to other survey findings; however, Meisel²⁵ has provided some data on past federal Social Credit candidates. He noted a religious emphasis because of the eleven clergymen found among the one hundred and thirteen candidates. The proportion in business was higher than for other parties and the formal education of candidates was lower than for other parties. Non-Anglo-Saxon European ethnic groups were represented more than in other parties.²⁶

24

The Financial Post, op. cit., p. 79.

25

John Meisel, The Canadian General Election of 1957 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1962).

26

Ibid., summary from p. 228.

Another study gives a comparison of characteristics of elected officials from various political parties in Alberta.²⁷ Again, no direct comparison can be made but the data on elected officials during the Social Credit period may be examined in relation to that on party members.²⁸

In his study, Malliah shows that of elected officials, those born in Canada were equitably represented, Anglo-Saxons over-represented, Protestants were over-represented and Catholics under-represented.²⁹ This pattern is similar to that of the membership. Farmers have traditionally been under-represented in the Cabinet, although over-represented in the membership.

27

H. L. Malliah "A Socio-Historical Study of the Legislators of Alberta, 1905 - 1967" Edmonton: Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alberta, 1970.

28

It should be noted that the Malliah data includes all elected members during the Social Credit period. Thus only 73% of these are actually Social Credit.

29

Malliah, op.cit., p. 169, see Chapter VII for further comparisons.

5.11 SUMMARY

In summary although elected legislators were found to be better educated, and in the professional and business occupations, this is not the case among the rank-and-file membership of the party.

There are a number of key demographic characteristics which clearly differentiate the membership from the Alberta population. These include:

- . Urban areas are under-represented in the party compared to their numbers in Alberta.
- . Rural areas, small towns, and villages are over-represented in the membership compared to their percentage in the province.
- . A disproportionate number of party members come from Southern Alberta.
- . Men outnumber women two to one in the party.
- . Those in younger age groups make up a smaller percentage of the party membership than they of the total adult population.

- . Those above fifty make up a larger proportion than they do in the general Alberta population.
- . White collar, skilled and unskilled workmen make up a smaller part of the membership than they do of the general public.
- . Farmers and housewives make up a larger proportion of the membership than they do of the population of Alberta.
- . Most party members are long-time residents of Alberta, whereas many of Alberta's residents have lived in the province for only a short time.
- . The education levels of the membership are similar to those of the Alberta population.
- . Income levels of the membership are remarkably similar to those of the Alberta population.

On the above two variables, Milbrath's hypothesis that "higher socio-economic status is positively associated with increased likelihood of participation in many political acts; higher socio-economic status persons are more

likely to vote, attend meetings, join a party, campaign and so forth."³⁰ Of course this hypothesis might still be true for over-all political participation in Alberta, and probably is. It is not confirmed, however, for membership participation in the Social Credit Party.

- . A higher percentage of party members were born outside of Canada than is the case for the general population.
- . A disproportionately high percentage of non-native born members are from the U.S.A.
- . A higher percentage of party members are of British origin than of Albertans on the whole, although there is a high rate of those of other European ethnic origins participating in the party.
- . The party proportionately has fewer Catholic, United Church and Anglican Church members than the population of Alberta.

30

Milbrath, op.cit., p.17.

- . The party has a higher percentage of other Protestant church members (including Baptist, Brethren, Pentecostal, Church of God) than the population of Alberta as a whole.
- . The party members have larger families on the average than the population of Alberta.
- . The percentage of party members who own their own home, and live in single house accommodation is much higher than it is for the total population of Alberta.

The hypothesis, put forward in chapter one, that the Social Credit Party is representative of the Alberta electorate is partially confirmed. For some key characteristics such education and income, the party is representative; for some others, such as age and residency, it is not. In still other areas, the party exhibits strong differences, such as in religious affiliations, church attendance, and family size.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ALBERTA SOCIAL CREDIT LEAGUE: MEMBERSHIP PARTICIPATION PROFILE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will outline aspects of political participation of the membership, as well as some of their views about the party, leaders, and politics in general.

It will seek first of all to determine why the respondents joined the party, and their perception as to how they originally got involved in politics.

It will then report on a number of political activities of the membership: where members get their information, what they do, how they vote federally, and how much they campaign. Finally, it will then outline the opinions of the membership on party organization, and on future directions of the party.

6.1 INVOLVEMENT IN THE PARTY

This section will be concerned with some facts about the party members; specifically, why they joined the party and what factor, in their view, was primarily responsible for getting them involved in politics.

The first table in this chapter summarizes the reasons given by the respondents as to why they joined the Alberta Social Credit League.

TABLE VI-1
MEMBERSHIP PARTICIPATION:
REASONS FOR JOINING THE PARTY

Respondents' Primary Reason for Joining the Party	Percentage of Sample
Social Credit philosophy, Principles, policies, issues, programs	52.73
To influence a nomination	10.35
High calibre of leaders	6.01
Influence of others, friends, associations	4.90
Parents	4.06
Other (see examples of "other" reasons given)	10.91
Don't Know	0.28
Not Ascertained	9.65
Inapplicable	1.12
	n=715

The reasons of those who joined to influence a nomination, because of the leaders, because of the influence of friends, associates or parents, are implicit in the categories. Some examples, however, will be given to illustrate the "principle" and "other" categories.

Principles - Issues

Following are some examples of reasons of those who joined because of principles or issues:

"Independence. It is not run by the East in any way, as we are in so many other ways."

"Social Credit represents a solution to our problems - and it's run along Christian principles."

"I am a no-party man but the Social Credit philosophy means we can apply our unlimited resources for the good of all."

"The only way Canada will get out of this economic mess is to go Social Credit."

"I started farming on my own and it was real hard going. Social Credit tried to help and did a good job in introducing new policies."

"Other parties were unable to help... Social Credit offered political and economic reform."

"Social Credit believes in the control of credit and currency, as a means of supplying those in need with providing the necessities of life."

The category of "other" is made up of a number of reasons, which includes 1) a desire to help the party, 2) to oppose Liberal, Conservative or New Democratic candidates, 3) to acquire information about Social Credit, 4) to support the government, 5) because of the influence of the 1930's, 6) to help make changes, 7) to support political and economic reform, 8) to have more influence, 9) to become active, 10) because the respondent was personally helped by the party or government.

Following are representative comments from the sample for each of the ten sub-categories which together make up the 11% of the respondents who form the "other" category.¹

1) To help the party:

"To help our Government fight and work for a better place in which to live."

"I felt the organization should be stronger. More members add strength and it was the least I could do. There is strength in numbers."

2) To oppose:

"To get rid of those damn old parties."

"To take a definite stand against socialistic tendencies appearing foremost in the N.D.P., and in a veiled way, in the old line parties."

3) To acquire information about Social Credit:

"We joined hoping to find out more about Social Credit and what it really stands for. So far we haven't, we remain the same."

¹ This represents over eighty respondents.

"To understand and get to know the facts about the party and their activities. To get to know the good points of the party and to point out to friends who don't listen to any news or programs and put them on the right track."

"I felt my education was lacking when it came to government, and wanted to learn more about the operation of the province."

"I like to read a lot and belonging to the League makes me eligible for the reading material on Social Credit."

4) to support the government:

"Because I feel proud of the party. It's a Western party for the West."

"I want to help educate the public as to the facts that Social Credit is the finest government."

5) the influence of the 1930's:

"It seemed the answer to our problems in the dirty thirties and I feel that the Socreds have not been able to change the monetary system but they have at least made good use of the natural resources and handled things very well."

"I supported the Liberal party until I saw what Social Credit had accomplished between 1935 and 1939."

"I was along in the great landslide of 1935, and was never again interested in the old line parties."

6) to help make changes:

"I feel that changes can be made...I thought I might get a better understanding of government and help them with some of their problems."

"To help activate and crystallize a movement in the younger generation for dynamic Social Credit policies."

7) to support reform:

"I wanted to see reform in education."

"To give support to economic reform."

8) to have more influence

"I would like to have a part in choosing our leaders. I feel membership gives me an opportunity to do this."

"So I could have a role in the choice of representatives and League decisions."

9) to become active:

"Because one could get involved, as long as one is making some effort, no matter how little, it helps."

"I was always Social Credit, but joined to take a more active role. The best way is to co-operate and be an active citizen."

"At university our professor encouraged us to join a party - preferably Liberal. I had always been interested in Social Credit and sought to join."

10) had received help from the government:

"It was the Social Credit government that kept our homestead for my father."

"Social Credit was set up for the lower income groups. They offered an improvement to the situation in Alberta."

About one-half of all respondents, however, stated that they joined the party because of their attraction to and agreement with the principles, policies, programs or philosophy of Social Credit. Many explained what this meant to them, but in general, they outlined their commitment to the

ideology and objectives of the Social Credit Party. Thus, well over half joined the party for what they perceived to be substantive reasons, for the sake of their beliefs rather than for some instrumental reasons such as supporting a particular candidate or a similar reason.

Another ten percent of the sample indicated that they had joined for the sole reason of being able to participate in and influence the outcome of, nominating meetings. Six percent expressed their loyalty and commitment to various party and government leaders, and stated that this factor was instrumental in their deciding to join the League.

Another nine percent of the sample joined because of others, five percent had been influenced by friends or associates, and four percent by parents.

Of those who gave a second reason for joining the party, Table VI - 2 shows the response.

TABLE VI - 2

SECONDARY REASONS FOR JOINING THE LEAGUE

Secondary Responses	Percentage of Sample
High Calibre of leaders	35.0
Principles, policies, issues	18.0
To influence a nomination	13.0
Influence of others	10.0
Others	22.5
Parents	1.5
	n=143

For those who offered a second response to the question, leadership becomes the most popular answer (over one-third gave leadership as their second reason), while principles and policies becomes second. A desire to influence a nomination is in third place. The other category containing the ten reason areas as previously outlined, remains important for twenty-two percent of respondents.

The next table shows the reasons the respondents joined, by age:

TABLE VI - 3
REASON JOINED, BY AGE
("others" etc., excluded)

<u>REASON</u>	<u>AGE GROUP</u>		
	<u>15 - 29</u>	<u>30 - 64</u>	<u>65 & Over</u>
Parents Influence	27.5	5.7	2.8
Social Credit Principles, Philosophy	58.5	64.1	80.4
Influence of Others	2.5	7.2	2.8
Influence a Nomination	10.0	15.5	2.8
Calibre of Leaders	1.5	7.5	11.2
			n=644
	d.f. 8	Chi-sqaure	p < .01
			62

Although most responses for all ages were in the principles and issues category, it is noteworthy that the largest group who claimed parents influence was primary are in the younger age group, and that most of those who are attracted by the leadership are in the 65 and over age category. The, too, as age increases, so does the importance of principles and policies. This also corresponds to the influence of the economic depression of the nineteen-thirties. Young people are less concerned with either principles or leaders, and more were influenced by parents or by the desire to influence a nomination. These people may be contrasted to

the older members in that the older members were attracted to a new party and had to develop it; to the younger members it was an established reality, and would be influenced by different factors. Of course, most of the older members could not have joined because of their parents.

Education. Those with completed higher education claimed parents' influence more often than other groups, while those with some university only were attracted by the leadership to a greater extent than other groups (yet only fifteen percent of this group claimed leadership was the primary reason). The modal response from all education categories was the philosophy of the party.

Income. Members with higher incomes claimed that more often than did other groups the influence of parents motivated them to join the party, although even for this group the modal response was principles and issues (except for the highest group). For the higher income groups also there were more who were motivated to join to influence a nomination (twenty-five percent) than for other income groups (only nine percent for those under three thousand).

The next questions were phrased somewhat differently, the objective being to find out what or whom the respondent perceived to be the stimulus which originally got him involved in politics altogether. Table VI - 4 summarizes the responses.

TABLE VI - 4
ORIGINAL INVOLVEMENT

Original Involvement in Politics	Percentage of Sample
Principles, Policies, Issues	39.16
Parents	20.14
Influence of other people	9.65
High Calibre of Leaders	3.92
To influence a nomination	3.36
Other (see examples of "other reasons" given)	7.69
Not Ascertained	11.75
Inapplicable Answers	4.34
n= 715	

Some selected statements as to the respondents' perceived reason as to original involvement in politics from the categories listed, are included:

Principles, Policies, Issues

"Economic conditions made it evident that our economic system in Canada needed changing."

"The Social Credit philosophy and principles were the reason I got involved in politics."

"The Dutch Church members are interested in parties who have good principles. Social Credit is such a party."

Parents

"My parents' farm was saved by Social Credit. When they joined, I became Social Credit also."

The "Other" category includes these other reasons:

- 1) influence of news media
- 2) personal reasons
- 3) opposition to others
- 4) study of politics

5) a desire to participate

6) a sense of duty.

Some examples of these responses follow:

1) influence of news media

"News media and current events aroused my interest."

"Election advertising got me really interested."

"Interest created by television made me more conscious of politics."

2) personal

"My own interest and curiosity made me decide to start attending meetings."

"I desire to see sincerity and honesty in politics."

3) opposition

"Pure disgust with all other parties got me interested."

"When I realized how miserable the two old-line parties were, I decided to get involved through Social Credit."

4) study

"My knowledge of politics was limited, and I felt by joining the party one supported by his vote one could become knowledgeable, and thereby become involved with those who could advise and enlighten me."

"Since school days, I have been interested in history and social studies."

5) participation

"A realization that very few people were taking any interest in politics which could lead to a very bad situation."

"I first became involved when asked to help in an election campaign and around election time I like to participate."

6) sense of duty

"I felt it was my duty to get involved as a citizen."

"Our church teaches us that we should support the government of the country; it's one's duty to participate in politics."

For this question, (original involvement in politics) almost forty percent of the sample gave answers dealing with the ideology or philosophy of Social Credit. Over twenty percent stated that it was the influence of parents which got them involved. and another ten percent attributed their original involvement to other individuals -- friends, neighbors, and associates. Of course. these answers were those given by the respondents. Objectively, it may be that, for example, more were influenced by parents or leaders than are included and may attribute their involvement

to principles or policies. Even so, the influence of parents, friends and leaders accounts for very close to one-half of the sample. Most research done on this subject confirms that parents have an important effect on the party preference and ideology of children.

Lane and Sears point out that "research on youthful political beliefs indicates that children learn to identify with political parties during the grammar school years."² The Easton and Hess study (quoted in Lane and Sears), reveals that a strong majority of children align themselves with a party in the very early grades. Children likely adopt party identification in much the same way they appropriate religious beliefs, the family name and other basic characteristics. This aspect of political behaviour is generally established early. Yet a study of the membership, and more generally a study of the electorate as a whole, indicates that other factors such as group and peer influence, class characteristics, and social factors have important influences on

2

Robert E. Lane and David O. Sears, Public Opinion (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p. 20.

this pattern, since young people obviously did not follow their parents' choice of party. The family is of course only one agent of socialization, and Hyman, in summarizing numerous studies, concludes that "foremost among agencies of socialization into politics is the family."³ Evidence indicates that family environment and influence plays a strong and fundamental role as it pertains to party preference. This is probably more applicable where there is a typical two-party system such as in many American States where many of these studies were carried out. This general correspondence between parent and child as regards party affiliation is mitigated in Alberta, more than usual partly by changing social structures -- from rural to urban, from agriculture to urban types of occupations, and from traditional rural values to urban middle class value structures. Social mobilization, geographical mobility, and educational changes, attenuate parental influences. But more important is the fact that Alberta has never experienced the typical two-party system.

3

Herbert H. Hyman, Political Socialization, a Study in the Psychology of Political Behaviour (New York: Free Press, 1969), p. 51.

Macpherson has called the system "quasi-party"⁴ but it has been described perhaps more accurately by Pinard:

Since its creation in 1905 the Province of Alberta has apparently always been one of one-party dominance.⁵

The traditional one-party dominance history of Alberta politics and the history of Western Canada must be part of any understanding of political socialization in the province. Then too, the relative youth of the party⁶ should be kept in mind since those who joined the new movement were departing from parties supported by their parents, although not from the tradition of Western Canadian politics.

The fact remains that deviation from the politics of parents in most of the American studies is very small -- in Canada, the party membership and changing electoral support indicates considerable variation in party support between generations. This does not necessarily mean however, a change

4

Macpherson, Democracy in Alberta, op.cit.

5

Maurice Pinard, The Rise of a Third Party (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p.42.

6

The party was established in 1934 whereas the Liberal and Conservative parties have been functioning in Canada since 1867.

in basic ideology.

An equivalent demonstration of the relative influence of parents versus others is available from the realm of ideology. From one study using intra-family correlation in the Remmers and Weltman study, the correlation and ideology for the parent-child pair was .86.⁷

Hess and Torney⁸ argues that effectiveness of the family in transmitting attitudes has been overestimated in previous research. They argue that other institutions are probably more effective in teaching political information and general political orientation. In their view, the

⁷ Hyman, op.cit., p. 82.

⁸ Robert D. Hess and Judith B. Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1967).

school is more central and dominant in the development of attitudes, conceptions and beliefs about the political system.

For those who gave a secondary reason for their original involvement in politics, Table VI - 5 summarizes these responses.

TABLE VI - 5
SECONDARY RESPONSE TO INVOLVEMENT

Secondary Reasons stated for Original Involvement in Politics	Percentage of Respondents
Principles, policies, issues	50
Influence of other people, including parents and others	20
High calibre of Leaders	13
To influence a nomination	5
Others	13
	n= 143

Principles and policies is again the most frequently stated reason, with the influence of others, and leaders, following. The number of respondents who gave a third reason is too small to analyze, except to note that leadership was the most frequently mentioned reason given by this group.

The next section discusses intra-party differences in original involvement in politics as according to sex, education, age and income variables.

1. Sex: The only difference is in the "influence of other people" category, where 19% of the females place themselves as contrasted to 8% of the males. They were equal as to the influence of parents; for both, 30% attributed their involvement to parents.
2. Education: Again, the higher the education, the more likely the member was influenced by parents to get involved (22% for those with less than Grade 8, up to 50% for those with post-graduate education). Again, more of those

with higher education got involved to influence a nomination than those with less education (3% of those with less than Grade 8 as compared to 10% of those with some university).

3. Age: The younger the member, the more likely he said he was influenced by parents; the older the member, the more often he claimed it was the philosophy of the party which interested him. The younger the member, the more often influence of others was claimed and for leadership; leadership was more important for the middle-aged (30-49) than for other age categories.

4. Income: Those members with higher incomes mention parental influence more often than do other groups (22% for those under 3,000 and 41% for those between 15 - 30,000). The importance of principles and issues declines with an increase in income; the importance of parental influence increases, as does the motivation to influence a nomination.

6.2 POLITICAL INFORMATION AND ACTIVITY

The next set of tables is an attempt to find out about some of the political activities of the membership. Table VI - 6 and VI - 7 show where the members claim to obtain most of their information. Table VI - 6 shows their first or primary response and Table VI - 7 the secondary response where one was given.

TABLE VI - 6

INFORMATION SOURCE

Source	Percentage of Sample
Newspapers and Magazines	76.08
TV and Radio	12.73
Communication with friends	5.31
Books	1.12
Other	1.82
Not Ascertained	2.94
n= 715	

It is noteworthy that most of the members state as their primary source of information the printed word - newspapers, magazines, and the like; the electronic media are second in importance.

TABLE VI - 7
SOURCE OF INFORMATION
SECONDARY RESPONSE

TV and Radio	65.45	
Communication with friends	19.69	
Books	8.35	
Newspapers/Magazines	2.02	
Other	2.18	
Not Applicable	2.31	n= 536

Those who gave no second response are excluded from Table VI - 7. Most of those in the sample regard newspapers and/or magazines as their primary source of

information, followed by television and radio. In secondary responses, however, aside from the electronic media, the secondary source for most of the sample, communication with friends and information from books surpasses newspapers and magazines as a source of information.

Table VI - 8 through VI - 15 outlines the political activities of the membership, beginning with a question about the holding of official positions in the Alberta Social Credit League.

TABLE VI - 8
OFFICIAL POSITION IN PARTY

Official Position	Percentage of Sample
Yes	18.46
No	67.41
Not Ascertained	12.03
Inapplicable	1.96
n= 715	

About one-fifth of the sample have held some kind of official position within the party at one time or another. This of course includes the numerous local constituency positions. About 15% of the sample have been delegates to the annual provincial convention at one time or another as indicated in Table VI - 9.

TABLE VI - 9
MEMBERSHIP CONVENTION ATTENDANCE

Attendance	Percentage of Sample
Yes	15.52
No	81.26
Not Ascertained	3.08
Inapplicable	0.14
	n= 715

For those who had ever attended, a further question was asked about the number of conventions, and this information is in Table VI - 10.

TABLE VI - 10
NUMBER OF CONVENTIONS ATTENDED

Number of Times	Percentage of Sample
One or Two	42
Three to Five	21
Five to Ten	13
More than Ten	9
Not Ascertained	15
n= 114	

Most of the sample had only attended the annual convention once or twice as delegates, the second greatest number had attended three to five times, and only 9% had attended more than ten times.

The next three tables show whether or not the member had actively campaigned during the last election, and if so, how much time was spent in the activity.

TABLE VI - 11
MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY

Active in Last Provincial Election	Percentage of Sample
Yes	28.39
No	66.29
Not Ascertained	5.31
	n= 715

The following shows the campaign activity differences based on sex and length of membership:

One out of three males actively campaigned during the last provincial election, but only one out of every five females did so. This was expected and although rather obvious, it confirms the Milbrath hypothesis about the greater participation of men, not only in membership but in amount of activity, given membership.⁹

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Milbrath, p. 135.

The next table shows the length of membership and whether or not the member campaigned. It indicates quite clearly that campaign activity increased in groups who had been members for a long period. This confirms the Milbrath hypothesis that the longer a person resides in a community the more likely he is to participate in the political life of that community.¹⁰

TABLE VI - 12

ACTIVE CAMPAIGNING AND LENGTH OF MEMBERSHIP

Length of Membership	Yes	No
Less than 6 months	0.0	100.0
6 months to 1 year	20.0	79.8
1 - 5 years	23.1	76.9
5 - 10 years	29.7	70.3
10 - 20 years	40.6	59.4
20 years and over	41.9	58.1
n= 700		
d.f. 5	chi square 12	p <.01

¹⁰

Milbrath, p. 133.

For those who did campaign in the previous election, table TV - 13 shows the amount of time included in campaigning.

TABLE VI - 13
CAMPAIGN TABLE

TOTAL TIME SPENT	PERCENTAGE OF SAMPLE
Little (less than 25 hours)	36%
Some (25 - 50 hours)	20%
A Great Deal (more than 50 hours)	10%
Don't know/can't remember	2%
Not Ascertained/ not stated in hours	30%
Other	1%
n= 238	

Thus it may be estimated that approximately 30% of the membership contribute more than twenty-five hours to campaign activity. Close to one-third of the membership claim that their contribution to campaigning amounts to more than half of a normal work week, a considerable contribution.

Table VI - 14 states the amount of time per weeks spent campaigning by those who previously stated that they did actively campaign.

TABLE VI - 14
HOURS OF CAMPAIGN TIME

Number of hours per week	Percentage of Sample
Less than One hour	3%
One to Two hours	6%
Two to Five hours	13%
Over Five hours	24%
Don't know/ can't remember	2%
Not Ascertained/ not stated in time	52%
n= 238	

More than one-third of the membership who work on the campaign, according to the above table, devote more than two hours per week to party activities during the campaign.

The next table, VI - 15, was prepared from a question which asked the respondent to state what his primary activity was as a member.

TABLE VI - 15

MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITY

Respondent's Primary Activity as a Member	Percentage of Respondents
Little or nothing	41%
Discussions/study groups/reading, talking with others/explaining the party or government	26%
Attendance at constituency meetings and/or conventions	15%
Financial contributions to the Party	3%
Serving as a League Officer	2%
Other activities (education, nominations, social gatherings, recruit, etc.)	9%
Answers inapplicable to question	2%
n = 536	

The modal response falls into the first category - respondents reported little or nothing in the way of activities. However, many respondents were unhappy with the situation and expressed a desire for more activities:

more information from the party headquarters
 more political and educational meetings
 more activities to attract new and young members
 more social functions

This is an important finding: to many members, the party was not active enough; they wanted more than token membership, they wanted to participate in activities, learn more, and so on.

Within the party the following differences emerged as to activities as League members:

Age. Those under 30 years of age reported in greatest numbers that they did little or nothing. Thus not only do young people participate less in joining the party, but, having joined, they are less active than older members.

Those in the age group 30 - 64 most often stated that they served as officers. This confirms the Milbrath hypotheses about participation by age groups.¹¹

Those over 65 mentioned their activities as party boosters more often than did other age groups.

Both of these findings confirm the hypothesis that "participation rises gradually with age,

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Milbrath, p. 133.

reaches its peak and levels off in the forties and fifties, and gradually declines after sixty."¹² Those over sixty-five tend to be over-represented as members, but see their activity primarily as that of party booster rather than as officers or party workers.

Farmers and housewives mentioned attendance at meetings and conventions more than did members in other occupational groups. Businessmen most often mentioned nothing or little as their primary activity as a member. White collar and professional people most often mentioned the holding of a party office as their main activity. In the Social Credit Party Milbrath's hypothesis that farmers are less likely to participate than city dwellers¹³ does not hold true. It could still hold true for the total electorate but not for the party.

¹² Milbrath, p. 134.

¹³ Milbrath, p. 134.

Those with a grade twelve education mentioned holding an office in the party more often than other groups, 6.4% as compared with 4.8% of those with university and 4.3% for those with less than high school.

Thus the Milbrath hypothesis about the likelihood of those with higher education to participate more often¹⁴ does not hold true as far as participation in the administration of the party is concerned.

The party, insofar as it seems to involve more rural and less educated people, and more lower income groups, than the population of Alberta, is an exception to the characteristics and behaviour of most parties. In this sense it has remained a populist party; it has retained the involvement and active participation of many people who in other parties often are not involved.

14

Milbrath, p. 122.

6.3 MEMBERSHIP OPINIONS ON PARTY ORGANIZATION, FEDERAL VOTING, BEHAVIOUR AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF THE PARTY

The third section in this chapter deals with the members' perception of party organization, and opinions about future activities and organizational plans. It then turns to a presentation of the members' federal voting behaviour and examines the implications of this pattern.

Table VI - 16 refers to the satisfaction of members with procedures of the party for the nomination of Members of the Legislative Assembly.

TABLE VI - 16

VIEW ON NOMINATION PROCEDURES

Directional Changes Suggested Percentage of Respondents for M.L.A. Nominations	
Would like more restrictions and tighter party control	36%
Would like more open conventions	29%
Other miscellaneous suggestions	35%
n= 143	

Thus, 36% of members want tighter party control over nominations, while fewer, only 29% want to open conventions and make it easier for others (non-party or new party members) to participate. This is a particularly important datum since it is indicative of the degree to which party members are outward looking.

The miscellaneous suggestions are too disparate to discuss, but the important finding is that the membership is divided between more open and more restricted procedures for nominations, with those favouring more restrictions having a slight plurality of 6%.

The next set of tables refers to more specifically political questions dealing with the Social Credit Party, its federal activities, and with opinions about party organization and leadership and general party communications.

For these questions, most tables have been adjusted to exclude respondents who had no comment to make, except in cases where it was felt that this in itself would be useful information. Where the number of respondents is less than the total sample, the number will be given.

TABLE VI - 17
OPINIONS ABOUT NAME OF THE PARTY

Social Credit Should reconsider its name	Percentage of Respondents
Strongly Approve	8%
Approve	30%
Disapprove	30%
Strongly Disapprove	15%
No Comment	17%
n= 643	

Within the party, this question is closely related to education and income:

Education. For those with less than Grade 8 only 26% approve of a name change. This increases to 41% for those with Grade 12, and 58% for those with a university degree.

Income. Similarly, only 27% of those under 3,000 would approve of a change of name, but 50% of those between 10,000 - 15,000 approve, and 60% of those between 15,000 and 30,000 approve.

The total membership is split on the question, although slightly more disapprove than approve of the idea.

TABLE VI - 18
FEDERAL ACTIVITY

Social Credit Should Field More Candidates Federally	Percentage Response
Strongly Approve	16%
Approve	49%
Disapprove	16%
Strongly Disapprove	5%
No Comment	14%
	n= 608

Although more than half are in favor of fielding more federal candidates it is significant that more than one-fifth of the members disapprove of such action, and another large group have no comment about federal activity.

TABLE VI - 19
SUPPORT OF OTHER PARTIES

Social Credit Should Support Other Parties Federally	Percentage Response
Strongly Approve	6%
Approve	36%
Disapprove	25%
Strongly Disapprove	18%
No Comment	15%
	n= 601

Again, it is important to note that the membership is split on the question, almost as many members favor supporting another federal party as favor federal Social Credit Party activity. It may be fairly concluded that with such a division the party would not in fact re-enter federal politics or, if it did so, the effort would not command the backing of a majority of members.

TABLE VI - 20
FEDERAL CO-OPERATION

Which Federal Party Social Credit Could Work With	Percentage Response
Conservatives	72%
Liberals	4%
New Democratic Party	1%
No Other Party	12%
Other suggestions and inapplicable answers	11%
	n= 644

Many of those in the "Other suggestions and inapplicable answers" category answered by discussing the party in terms other than federal co-operation. But in any case the number of members who take a strong position against co-operating with other parties is very small -- only 12%. The overwhelming majority (72%) favor co-operation with the Conservative Party. There is just no escaping the fact that most Social Credit Party members feel positive toward the federal Conservative Party, and although it is too early to say, this positive feeling toward working with the federal Conservative Party may well

already have or might in the future cause a similar attitude to the provincial Conservative Party.

With these opinions of future party activity, the next section will deal with federal voting behavior.

Table VI - 21 deals with the voting behavior of Social Credit Party members in federal elections.

TABLE VI - 21
FEDERAL VOTING BEHAVIOR

Party Usually Supported in Federal Elections	Percentage Response
Social Credit Party	61%
Progressive Conservative Party	25%
Liberal	2%
New Democratic Party	1%
Switch Parties depending on Election	5%
Answers Inapplicable	6%
n= 643	

This table confirms the hypothesis that many people who support Social Credit provincially, support the Progressive Conservatives federally.

One out of four party members usually votes Conservative federally. This is a very important figure because the question was specifically worded to elicit a response about the usual practice of the respondent. Therefore, the fact that in the last one or two elections there were no Social Credit Party candidates in some constituencies would be a factor in the high percentage of members who voted Conservative. But more than that, these respondents were saying that this was indeed their usual practice.

This is suggestive of future research. It would be interesting to further examine federal and provincial voting patterns and to study any changes in provincial voting behavior.

The following tables show usual voting pattern by age, education, and income.

TABLE VI - 22
FEDERAL VOTING BEHAVIOUR AND AGE

Age		20-29	30-49	50-64	65+
FEDERAL VOTING	Social Credit	52.3	65.1	76.3	89.3
	Liberal	2.3	2.9	1.0	0.8
	Conservative	45.5	31.9	22.7	9.8
					n= 715
	d.f. 6	Chi square 37			p < .01

An increase in age also increased the chance of the member voting Social Credit federally; and conversely, the younger the age the greater the numbers who vote Conservative federally.

TABLE VI - 23
FEDERAL VOTING PATTERNS AND
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

FEDERAL VOTING	Education	Less than Grade 8	Grade 8	Some High School	Grade 12	Some University	University Degree
	Social Credit	78.2	76.9	74.1	63.4	76.1	58.3
	Liberal	1.3	1.5	0.0	3.6	2.2	12.5
	Conservative	20.5	21.5	25.9	33.0	21.7	29.2
							n= 715
		d.f. 10	Chi square 28			p < .01	

Education. There is a smaller percentage of those with a university degree who vote Social Credit federally, and a higher chance of them voting Liberal and Conservative.

Income variable. The higher the income the less likely the member voted Social Credit federally, and the higher the income, the higher the percentage of members who voted Conservative federally.

The respondents were asked what the Social Credit Party should do in future elections.

TABLE VI - 24
FUTURE FEDERAL ELECTIONS AND THE PARTY

The Social Credit Party should, in future elections	Percentage Response
Work and run by itself	39%
Align with the Conservatives	37%
Develop a new Party	18%
Work with Liberals	2%
Work with New Democratic Party	1%
Give up	2%
Don't know	1%
	n= 643

With such an internal division, it seems that it would be unlikely that the party could seriously enter the federal field. Almost as many party members think that the party should work with the Conservatives as think that the Social Credit Party should run on its own. Another one-fifth of party members are apparently unhappy with all federal parties, including their own, and would like to see a new party.

When the membership is categorized as to income, sex, age, occupation, and education, and these variables crossed with their opinion of the future of Social Credit, the following pattern emerges:

Income. The higher income members tend to favour either developing a new party or working with the Conservatives more often than lower income groups who more strongly favour that the party should work by itself.

Sex. There is a slight difference between males and females. Males tend to favour working with the Conservatives (39 - 34%) and females favour working with Social Credit (44 - 38%)

Age. The younger members tend to favour working with the Conservatives or creating a new party more than older members who tend to want Social Credit to work by itself. The following table shows this trend quite clearly:

TABLE VI - 25

DIRECTION IN FUTURE FEDERAL ELECTIONS AND AGE

Age		20-29	30-49	50-64	65+
FUTURE FEDERAL ELECTIONS	Work by itself	21.3	35.6	45.5	49.6
	Work with Liberals	2.1	1.7	3.3	1.6
	Work with Conservatives	51.1	41.4	34.0	30.9
	Develop a new Party	23.4	20.1	15.3	16.3
	Give up	2.1	1.3	1.9	1.6
					n= 715
	d.f. 12	Chi square 36		p < .01	

Occupation and Education. As to occupation and education, no important differences were discovered except that farmers were the strongest in favouring alignment with Conservatives.

The respondents were then asked, in a series of four questions, to discuss the leadership, the candidates, communications between leaders and party members, and communications between the League and members. Twenty-five percent praised the leadership, five percent complained about the Premier, and about fifteen percent of the respondents had more specific comments to make. Some of these will be mentioned here:

"There should be representatives throughout the province to listen to what people want and provide instruction and leadership for them."

This is a typical complaint; many respondents complained about the inadequacy of communication in the party, and the need for "more awareness of what people are thinking", for "educational programs about Social Credit", and for

"leadership sessions to train and groom younger members".

One member commented, "Most have been in too long and need to do new thinking, most spend too much time on past glories".

Of the 143 respondents who had a comment to make about the party candidates, the breakdown of these comments is as follows:

TABLE VI - 26
PERCEPTION OF CANDIDATES

Comments on Candidates	Response
Praise for Candidates	25
Complaints about quality or status of Candidates	55
Other miscellaneous comments	20
Didn't know about Candidates	5
n= 143	

The number of members who were dissatisfied with the candidates is very high, and comments like the following were typical: "There is a tendency to drift apart when things go well, a complacency which affects

the leadership and will affect the public." "There is not enough emphasis on obtaining leadership from the professional groups in our society -- nor from leaders of business. The conservatives could very easily develop a large following".

Table VI - 27 outlines respondents' views on communications between leaders and members.

TABLE VI - 27

PARTY COMMUNICATIONS

Leader-member communications - primary response	Percentage Response
Lack of contact with M.L.A.	30
Praise	21
Lack of contact with League	1
Others	16
Don't Know	2
Inapplicable Responses	30
	n=357

Almost one out of every three members who responded to the question was concerned with the lack of communication between his M.L.A. and himself. Obviously a significant portion of party members feel that their M.L.A. does not keep in touch to the degree they would like. A typical comment:

"There should be more communication between the M.L.A. and his constituency, especially his League supporters. There should be more study within the constituency."

On the question of communication between party members and the party organization, Table VI - 28 shows concern for the breakdown in local organizations referred to in chapter two.

TABLE VI -- 28
COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARTY AND MEMBERS

Primary response regarding communication	Percentage of Response
More meetings, literature, and information	33%
Praise of Organization	15%
Other miscellaneous comments	20%
Don't know	6%
Answers inapplicable to question	26%
n=286	

Fully one-third of respondents who answered this question were unhappy with the decline in the number of meetings, the decline in the amount of literature, and a general lack of information about both the party and the government.

The final group of questions had to do with the members' general concerns about the party, what they did and did not like about the party, and a question about political interest among the general population.

TABLE VI - 29
ASPECTS OF THE PARTY MENTIONED BY RESPONDENTS
AS PARTICULARLY GOOD

Aspects	Percentage Response
Party Organization and Program	20
Co-ordination and Integration functions	16
Information Received	12
Party Leadership	10
Other Responses - specific points or individuals	18
Don't Know	2
Inapplicable/Nothing in Particular	22
	n= 357

The next table summarizes responses to a question about the members' dislikes about the Party.

TABLE VI - 30
DISLIKES ABOUT THE PARTY

Particular Dislikes	Percentage of Responses
Communciation/Information deficiencies	20
Lack of Activity between elections	10
Lack of contact and recruitment of youth	10
No problems and Don't know	10
Other answers	45
Answers Inapplicable	5
	n=143

The three deficiencies most often mentioned included lack of information and inadequacy of communications from party and government leaders, the decline in activity between election campaigns, and a concern with the under-representation of young people in the party and the apparent lack of recruitment program for young people.

A number of respondents had particular criticisms

of individual party leaders and Cabinet Ministers. The general trend seems to be that party members were impressed with the content of party programs and election platforms and the general organization of the party, and were reasonably satisfied with the leadership although a lot of dissatisfaction was evident. But they were not pleased with the decline in activity, and felt that the frequency and quality of communications received was inadequate.

The comparable questions asked of the non-party sample were what they liked and disliked about politics. Almost 80% of the urban sample said there was nothing they liked about politics, although over 50% had specific things they didn't like. Of those who had something they did like, particular leaders or policies were mentioned by 5% and 8% thought politics was interesting and lively. But one-half of those who had a comment about what they disliked, identified party disputes and political clashes as repugnant for them.

The same priority for information was evident in the responses among the membership about ways of interesting more people in politics.

TABLE VI - 31
INTEREST IN POLITICS/PARTY

Ways to make more people interested in politics	Response Percentage
Improve communications and information systems	38
Involve young people in activities and positions	8
Reintroduce monetary economic reform proposals	6
Improve content of Social Credit Programs	6
Give citizens more say in decisions	6
Improve political education	5
Hold meetings and social gatherings	5
Improve performance of government members	4
Honesty	3
Other (specific) responses	10
Don't Know	7
Inapplicable Responses	8
n=429	

Some of the responses labelled as "other" in the above table are of considerable interest and some will be mentioned in this section. What is clear from this and the previous tables, however, is that party members perceive a serious lack in the information systems of both party and government.

Within the membership there were some interesting differences.

Sex. Males thought policy needed improvement more often than females (27% - 14%), whereas females thought communication was in need of improvement more than did males (75% - 55%).

Education. While all groups were most concerned with communication within the party, the least educated mentioned the need to attract young people into the party more often than other educational groups except those with post-graduate education.

Income. It is very interesting that the income group which expressed their concern about

improved policy in the greatest number was the income group of under 3,000. The middle income group (of 5,000 - 6,999) was strongest in numbers on the need to improve communications. The income group of 7,000 - 9,999 mentioned "more say in government" more often than other groups.

The non-party sample was asked the same question and the following results were obtained.

TABLE VI - 32

INTEREST IN POLITICS/GENERAL ELECTORATE CONCERNS

Ways to make more people interested in politics	Percentage Response
Need more honesty and better candidates	25%
Improve communications	24%
Political education	20%
Involve Young People	10%
Hold meetings and discussions	6%
Others	15%

n= 225

Although the non-party sample respondents were also very concerned about communications, they mentioned honesty and the kind of people who were political candidates more often than any other subject. The implication in the urban sample's response is that a primary problem is dishonesty, while this is mentioned by few of the party members who presumably have a higher regard for the candidates and the candidates' honesty.

Following are some typical responses of party members for selected categories:

Education

"We need better school courses on political economy."

"Politics could and should be taught in schools as a major subject."

"The workings of government should be clearer. Through the use of television for instance, more women could become interested and politically inclined."

A number of others thought there should be courses in government and politics as a part of the curriculum.

Economy

"We should explain the need for monetary

reform - explain the reasons for continued poverty in the midst of plenty."

Meetings

"The only time M.L.A.'s are seen is at election time. Have more meetings - field days and picnics, find out what people really need and want."

"More meetings and get-togethers like we did years ago."

Participation

"Try to show people how politics really affects their individual situation. Then get them involved and invite them to participate in the party and accept responsibility."

Some identified the cost of involvement and suggested limits for campaign expenditures, and need for reform in that field. One suggested "revision of the methods of electioneering, a leadership change to reflect urbanization trends and new approaches to old problems."

Another suggested that the party "should get controversial candidates and original thinkers, like the founders of the party were."

The final question in this section has to do with the concept of social conservatism, a concept which was discussed and ratified as the official position of the party at the 1968 Annual Convention.¹⁵

The first table on this subject deals with the members' comments about the term social conservatism, the topic of E. C. Manning's book on political realignment (discussed in chapter three).

TABLE VI - 33
SOCIAL CONSERVATISM

Opinion about Social Conservatism	Percentage Response
Positive	41
Negative	33
No Opinion	26
	n= 715

15

Report of the Annual Alberta Social Credit
League Convention, 1968.

Less than half of the membership had a positive response to the term, and fully one-third disliked the term.

Table VI - 34 summarizes the respondent's definition of the term.

TABLE VI - 34
MEANING OF SOCIAL CONSERVATISM

Category	Percentage Response
General Comments described below	50
Social Credit and Progressive Conservative Coalition	25
No meaning or could not define	15
Explained in terms of social commitment and conservative or free enterprise economic policies	10
	n=459

Thus within the membership of the party only ten percent could define or explain the term in the way in which

it was described by Manning in "Political Realignment".
Another 25% described it accurately in operational terms.

But one-half had more general comments, some of which will be quoted here. These comments are typical, selected from over two hundred comments in this category.

"Implies a European type of party, too many splinter groups."

"It leads us away from the monetary reform which is what is important about Social Credit."

"Social means too much government control ...Conservative means not being bold enough to take a chance on change."

"It means losing our identity. Social should mean what it says - together - not left or right."

"A compromise between Bay Street and the welfare state."

Many comments mention loss of identity and the sacrifice of policies and ideals which the respondents believe in.

"It means sacrificing what we have been trying to achieve."

"Social Credit could be swallowed up by old line parties."

Others commented on the substance of the term as they viewed it:

"Concern for the needy combined with economic realism and free enterprise."

"A party concerned with social reform under a private enterprise business system."

"It would be a party to work for the west - especially the farmers."

"It expresses what we have been doing and truly represents what the party stands for."

"A responsible, contemporary, conservative position containing some of social credit's ideas, and others, requiring further development and refinement."

"All that the Party now stands for."

Many of the responses were made up of comments about a free enterprise economy and social welfare and needs.

The final table on this topic shows the opinion of the membership by age.

TABLE VI - 35

OPINION OF THE TERM SOCIAL CONSERVATIVE

Do you like the Term
'Social Conervative'

	Age	15-19	20-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Like		75.0	48.6	58.6	54.1	52.9
Dislike		25.0	51.4	41.4	45.9	47.1
						n = 715
		d.f. 4	chi square 2		p > .1	

Although there is no great difference here perhaps the main consideration is that a large minority of party members (and in the case of those 20-29 a majority)

actually dislike the term. It would seem that with such a division about Social Conservatism within the membership, it could not be expected that the idea could have a fundamental affect on the direction of the party; nor could one expect much enthusiasm about the idea.

In chapter seven, the opinions of the membership on various general government problems and selected social issues will be presented.

6.4 SUMMARY

The usual pattern in two party systems is for most children to support the same party as their parents. But most party members in the Social Credit League claimed that they joined because of the principles and policies of the party, and secondly because of the leaders of the party. But as to the reason why they originally got interested in politics (as distinct from joining a particular party), one-fifth claimed it was because of the influence of their parents, and another ten percent through the influence of friends and associates.

In giving reasons why they joined the party, the role of principles and policy (or ideology, broadly defined) correlates negatively with both increasing education and income levels. But at the same time it must be remembered that it was impossible for parents to influence the decision of many of the members, simply because of the age of the party.

One-fifth of the respondents have held official positions in the party and fifteen percent have attended the provincial convention at one time or another. Approximately one-third of the respondents take an active part in provincial

campaigns, and this was related to length of membership and length and residency in the province.

Respondents were divided about a number of party issues such as a review of the name, future activity federally, and future directions for promoting conventions. Forty-two percent thought Social Credit should support other parties federally, and seventy-two percent felt that the Party could work with the Conservatives in federal political activity. Twenty-five percent of the respondents stated that they usually voted Conservative federally, confirming the hypothesis that many provincial Socreds support the Conservative Party federally.

In summary, it was found that opinions on name change and Conservative federal voting behaviour correlated positively with increasing education and income levels.

Intra-party differences were shown previously in Section 6.3.

Over one-half of the respondents were dissatisfied with some aspect of the candidates put forward by the Party. Thirty percent complained of lack of contact with their Member of the Legislative Assembly. One-third of the respondents wanted more meetings, literature, and party and government

information. In fact, common communication and information deficiencies were identified as the main problem within the party. Lack of activity between elections, and failure to recruit among younger people were the other problems mentioned most often. One-third of the respondents did not like the term 'Social Conservative' and most did not know what the term meant.

What emerges from this pattern of participation and opinions on the state of the party is a desire by many respondents to see the party act more as a mass movement. There is a feeling of unease about the change which gradually took place as the party began to behave in some important aspects, in a manner more characteristic of other Canadian parties, and less like the social movement which it originally was. Perhaps one of the serious problems which the party faced, and faced ultimately unsuccessfully in electoral terms, was the problem of making the transition from a mass party to a modern cadre party organized to appeal to large urban areas. Ironically, although the party began by utilizing the mass media (Aberhart's use of radio is described in chapter three), its recent problems are to some extent due to a failure to utilize electronic media with any expertise.

Another factor was the leadership change, and the problem of party control following the long and effective

term of one leader, and his replacement by a leader who exercised less control over party activities, and had less political ability.

Aside from the leadership question however, the fact is that these fundamental concerns about information flow, communication patterns, participation, recruitment, and activities of all kinds, were evident prior to the leadership change. Thus, the whole party was itself in transition at the time of the leadership change. It was, based on the comments of the members, in need of invigoration and development, especially in information and communication networks, and in opportunities for social and educational participation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ALBERTA SOCIAL CREDIT LEAGUE:

MEMBERSHIP OPINION PROFILE

CHAPTER VII: THE ALBERTA SOCIAL CREDIT LEAGUE:

MEMBERSHIP OPINION PROFILE

7.1. Opinions and Attitudes

This chapter will report the opinions of the membership sample on a variety of questions. The opinions of the respondents about the problems of their own constituency, Alberta, and Canada will be presented. Wherever the respondents are quoted, their exact words will be used. A number of questions were designed to elicit responses from the membership which would give an indication of their perception of the party, the government, and a number of selected problems and issues.

Before presenting the opinions, however, a brief definition and discussion of the concept of opinion will be useful.

Rokeach defines attitudes as "a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner."¹

A belief system is a total system of beliefs; an ideology is the organization of beliefs and attitudes, more or less institutionalized and deriving from an external authority; values are underlying basis dispositions, referring to a desired end state.² In contrast, an opinion is a verbal expression of belief, attitude or value. An opinion may be a manifestation of underlying attitudes, but this is not necessarily so. An opinion is "an implicit

1

Milton Rokeach, Beliefs, Attitudes and Values (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1968), p. 112.

2

Rokeach, pp. 113, 114.

verbal response to the stimulus situation to which some question is raised."³ Opinions may thus be looked at from both the direction, negative or positive, of the response to a given question, and the intensity of response, the strength of opinion. "Expressed opinions are, after all, a form of behavior and opinions held are but one type of behavioral disposition."⁴ Opinions may be, as Lane and Sears point out, either informed or uninformed; therefore, the opinions of the sample will be differentiated on a number of issues and questions especially to see what differences if any exist within the membership, according to some key variables such as income, education and religion. With this opinion profile, the reader should be able to develop an understanding of the general orientation of the membership, and be able to predict a whole range of views and reactions.

³ Robert E. Lane and David O. Sears, Public Opinion (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964).

⁴ M. Brewster Smith, Social Psychology and Human Values (Chicago: Aldine, 1969), p. 79.

7.2 LOCAL PROVINCIAL, AND FEDERAL PROBLEMS AS PERCEIVED BY PARTY MEMBERS

The first three sets of tables in this chapter set out the problems of the constituency, the province, and the nation, as perceived and stated by the respondents.

Table VII-1 outlines responses indicating constituency problems.

TABLE VII-I

CONSTITUENCY PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED BY PARTY MEMBERS

Main Problems Identified in the Constituency	Percentage of Respondents
Social Credit Organization, MLA's., League	17
Agriculture	15
Education	13
Highways	10
Welfare	7
Inflation and Taxes	6
Housing	5
Industry and Employment	4
Hospital and Old Folks Homes	2
Rural Development	1
Young People	1
Others	10
Answers Inapplicable	7
Don't know of any problems	1
n=715	

Some examples of representative opinion will indicate the kind of problem the respondents were concerned with, where the category is not too obvious.

1) Social Credit Problems

"If ever there was such a thing as an 'easy election' the last one will certainly be the final one. Strong candidates will be necessary in the future. The party label was all that was required to win in the past. It will take more in years to come."

"Lack of study groups, need for more meetings, and need for teaching young people about Social Credit."

"Too much policy comes from above -- too little original thinking and opportunities from the groups."

One theme ran through the responses in this category; members were unhappy with the state of party organization and expressed a desire for more meetings, study groups, and indicated a need for recruitment of new and young members. There was concern about the trend toward holding meetings only at election time, and activity between elections was sought.

2) Agriculture

Agricultural problems centred around markets and prices. If we combine the concern with taxes and inflation and the concern with the agricultural problem, this problem then surpasses the concern with party organization and other internal party problems.

3) Welfare

Although some of the areas identified are agreed to by respondents as problem areas, there are differences among the respondents as to the substance of the problem, particularly in education and welfare. Respondents are split as to whether they think spending and programs in these two fields are inadequate or over-developed. More than half of those who identified welfare as the more important problem commented on the abuse of and extent of welfare. For example,

"Welfare is too easy to get and further investigation is needed into people receiving payments."

Only a minority thought welfare programs inadequate from the perspective of funding. A similar trend is found in the responses identifying education. A majority thought spending on education was too generous and related this to complaints about property tax.

4) Highways

Respondents were in agreement about highways: more roads were needed in their constituencies. The same applied to comments on hospitals and homes for the aged; staff shortages, lack of and inadequacy of facilities were mentioned by almost all of the respondents in those categories. For example,

"We need an old folks home nearer to the Crowsnest Pass."

"Outpatient Clinics for Southern Alberta are inadequate and poorly staffed."

5) Inflation and Taxes

Inflation and taxes centred around complaints about the property tax and the increase in the cost of living.

"Farm income is stagnant. We should have fair prices for our products in comparison to what we have to pay for machinery and other necessities."

On the other hand a city respondent said:

"Why do three-quarters of the people pay all the taxes. It's high time the farmers started paying more, the same as city people..."

6) Industry

In industry and employment, respondents thought insufficient efforts were being made to encourage industry and create employment. "More encouragement should be given to locate industries in smaller centres."

Some respondents felt that not enough attention was being given to rural economic development.

7) Others

The category headed "others" includes numerous specific and miscellaneous problems such as:

"Hutterites are buying all available land so a Canadian hasn't a chance to buy."

"No telephones. This is always the last part of the Province to get anything."

"Liquor outlets are a blot on and a menace to our society."

"Affluency, and a flouting of a principle, without which democracy cannot be maintained."

"Lack of government spending in this area of the constituency. Every taxpayer should have some benefits.:

"Not enough politics. Not what can I do for Alberta -- but how much can I channel into my own little sphere."

Of those members who indicated a second major problem in their constituency, most answers were related to highways and bridges, education, Social Credit organizational problems, and agriculture (prices and markets), and other purely local problems.

Table VII-2 summarizes the responses to the question asking about the main problems facing Alberta.

TABLE VII-2
MAIN PROBLEM IN ALBERTA/PARTY MEMBERS

Main Problem Facing Alberta	Percentage of Membership
Government Administration and Spending	23
Welfare	12
Inflation and Taxes	12
Education	10
Agriculture	10
Lack of interest in politics and Party problems	9
Federal-Provincial	4
Housing	4
Industry	3
Hospital and Old Age	2
Indian Problems	2
Others (see examples)	7
No Problems	less than 1
Answers Inapplicable	less than 1

n=459

Thus, when the members were asked to think provincially rather than locally, the problem emphasis shifted to a concern with the overall spending and administrative record of the Province, and a great number of respondents felt that the government was not exercising sufficient restraint or prudence in its spending and development programs. The government, it seems, was not conservative enough for a large portion of the sample who saw government spending as the main problem in Alberta.

In general, the comments given about subject areas of welfare, education, agriculture, and inflation and taxes, remain very similar to those given about local problems. Some different categories, however, suggest themselves. One of these is federal-provincial relations, an expression of concern over federal intrusion into areas of provincial jurisdiction. The problem of Indians was also mentioned by a number of respondents:

"Living conditions among Indians. How to help Indians start living a better life. How to give them self-confidence and start working for themselves."

"Better for Indians and Metis if the province was to accept responsibility rather than the federal government. These people must be helped immediately."

The lack of interest in politics in Alberta and party problems were, for nine per cent of the respondents, the main problems in the province. Some examples of the respondents' concern are:

"Indifference on the part of young folks is a great problem."

"During an election, the gophers come out and vote and then take cover for four years. There should be some more supporting squeaks during the interim."

"Provincial M.L.A.'s should take a more active role in supporting and stressing principles."

"I feel League members should have meetings or seminars so others can be involved and informed about the party."

"M.L.A.'s don't have enough voice in government. In the House they do pretty well as they are told."

There seems to be an underlying current of dissatisfaction with the lack of literature, meetings, seminar groups, and even social events, and an expression of disappointment with the provincial leadership vis-a-vis party activities although not necessarily with government activities. "There are no get-togethers any more. You just pay your dues and that's it." The underlying theme among many in the sample is actually an expression of unhappiness

with the basic shift in the party away from its former mass-party characteristics, and an uncomfortable feeling about the cadre type of operation which gradually and naturally developed over the years.

Other problems raised include pollution, labour laws, liquor and drug factors, poverty areas, and other concerns.

Of those in the sample who identified secondary problems, education and welfare spending was paramount, exceeded numerically only by those who had specific complaints to raise about laws, regulations, government policies and organizational problems within the party itself.

The same question, identification of the main problem facing Alberta, was asked in a study of the Alberta electorate, which was carried out in 1970 by the Alberta Government Committee on the Constitution. Since the parameters of the sample included eighty-five percent of the Alberta population, it will be used in this case for comparative purposes.

TABLE VII - 3
 MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM IN ALBERTA
 ALBERTA GENERAL ELECTORATE RESPONSE⁵

Response	Percentage of Respondents
Wheat Sales	22
No Problem	17
Inflation	10
Housing	9
Educational Costs	8
Natural Resources	8
Social Inequalities	7
Medical Services	6
Pollution	5
Welfare	4
Unemployment	3
Drug Abuse	3

5

This table is from David K. Elton, "Alberta Electorate Study", unpublished Government of Alberta, Committee on the Constitution study, 1970, p. 13.

Of those seventeen percent in Table VII-3 who responded by saying there was "no problem", two follow-up questions were asked to ensure that they had an opportunity to reflect on the question and name a problem if they wished. Thus, seventeen percent of the general electorate who responded to the question could think of no major problem, but less than one percent of party members answered the question with a "no problem".

Although there are more farmers among party members than among the electorate, twenty-two percent of the electorate named agriculture as the main problem, but only ten percent of the party membership did so. Obviously party members are more aware of existing problems and have broader concerns than the general electorate. This partially confirms the expectation that party members would be more aware of and more articulate about political and economic issues.

It is clear too that party members are aware of and concerned about government administration, spending, and tax problems to a far greater extent than the general electorate, who were concerned with agriculture and inflation

in a general way, or could think of no problem at all.

Another interesting difference between party members and the general electorate is that nine percent of the party members thought lack of interest in politics and the party was the main problem facing Canada, but the general electorate was not at all concerned with the state of political involvement and party problems.

The next table shows the main problems facing Canada as perceived by party members.

TABLE VII - 4
MAIN PROBLEM IN CANADA/PARTY MEMBERS

Primary Response about Main Problem Facing Canada	Percentage of Sample
Federal Political Scene	36
Economic Problem and Inflation	20
National Unity	18
Agriculture	10
Indians and Eskimos	3
Federal Government Operations	3
Foreign Affairs	3
Others	less than 1
Don't Know	4
Answers Inapplicable	2
n=430	

It is difficult to separate the concern with economic problems from the one with agriculture, since many of the problems expressed as inflation and rising costs are in reality closely related to agricultural problems. However, before the implications of these responses are discussed another Table (Table VII-5) will be introduced outlining the

results of a similar question asked of the general Alberta electorate. This will enable the reader to compare the problems identified by the party members with those mentioned by the general electorate.

For comparative purposes, the table is again taken from the Alberta Government Committee study survey which asked the question: What in your opinion is the most important problem in Canada today?

TABLE VII - 5⁶

CANADA'S MAIN PROBLEM/GENERAL ALBERTA ELECTORATE

Responses about Canada's most important problem	Percentage of Sample
Inflation	25
Canadian Unity	13
Agriculture	8
Housing	6
Cost of Living	5
Separatism	4
Drug Abuse	4
Social Inequalities	4
Taxes	4
Pollution	3
Crime	3
Education	2
Unemployment	2
Other	17
	n=439

6

David K. Elton, Alberta Electorate Study,
 Unpublished Government of Alberta Study, p.13.

Here again, the political concerns show a major difference between party members and the general electorate: more than one-third of the party members identify the federal political scene (whom to support, the future of Social Credit, federal parties in general, party inadequacies, problems in party identification and so on) as the primary problem; but to the electorate, economic problems of inflation and agriculture are dominant. Canadian unity is second within the electorate sample but third for party members, who are more concerned with the political scene and economic problems. Canadian unity is the problem for eighteen percent of party members but only thirteen percent of the general electorate. The other problems identified are diverse: the main difference in perception of problems is the saliency of political issues and party problems for the membership sample in viewing both provincial and national problems, and the lack of concern for these issues in the electorate at large. Some of these concerns of members follow:

"The years have proven that we don't have much hope on the national scene - our only hope is alliance with a large group and the development of a national ideology."

"We must elect a government who will realize there is a Western Canada. Western Canada is losing out to the East."

"We need a new constitution and a complete overhaul of the federal administration."

"The federal government should be kept out of the education field and also immigration should be a provincial matter."

Others commented on their desire to see Social Credit active federally, others to work with the Progressive Conservative Party, and others were concerned about lack of interest in public affairs. A number identified a swing to socialism as the most serious political problem:

Socialism-inefficiency becomes drastic with universal application of programs.

Increase in socialistic activity - too many things being forced through without giving people a chance to say no. Too much control and lack of freedom.

The next table shows the problem identified as the second most important problem for those respondents who identified more than one.

TABLE VII - 6

MAIN PROBLEM IN CANADA/SECONDARY RESPONSE PARTY
MEMBERS

Main Problem	Percentage Response
Economic, Inflation	40
Federal Political Life	25
National Unity	10
Foreign Affairs	5
Others	20

n= 143

In secondary responses, the economy and its performance and related problems are dominant concerns, but federal politics ranks second even for those in the sample who named some other problem as the main problem, and unity ranks third. The other problems include many subject areas too numerous to go into here. Members of the party thus tend to look at provincial and federal problems from the perspective of parties, political participation and groupings; the general electorate tends to look at more general economic problems as primary. This confirms the hypothesis (chapter one) that the party members' perception of problems is quite different from the general public, members having a higher rate of interest in and knowledge about politics.

7.3 GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA: ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT

The next set of questions dealt with the party members' general orientation to some problems faced by the Government of Alberta.

The first issue deals with a balanced budget, and by implication, government borrowing and deficit financing.

TABLE VII - 7
IMPORTANCE OF A BALANCED BUDGET TO PARTY MEMBERS

Importance	Percentage
Very Important	57
Important	31
Little Importance	05
Not Important At All	03
No Comment	04
	n=715

The Alberta Government was at this time departing from its traditional balanced budget position in favour of borrowing, especially for capital projects, but in some cases for current expenditures also. This is not favoured by party members, and subsequent developments have shown internal party disagreements over this question.

Table VII-8 deals with American investment: given the economic development in the province and the position taken by virtually all government leaders, and even many opposition leaders, the response is predictably overwhelmingly favourable to foreign investment.

TABLE VII - 8
AMERICAN INVESTMENT IN ALBERTA

View on Investment	Percentage Response
Very Good	31
Good	46
Bad	9
Very Bad	2
Difficult to Say	10
No Comment	2
	n=665

Only a small minority of the members view American investment in Alberta negatively. Very similar results were obtained for the same question about foreign investment in Canada as a whole.

Table VII-9 was aimed at finding out what source of revenues the respondents thought would be acceptable if taxes had to be raised for new programmes.

TABLE VII-9
NEW SOURCES OF REVENUE

Source Suggested	Percentage of Respondents
Sales Tax	48
Personal Income or Special Surtax	19
Business and Corporation Tax	6
Property and Buildings	3
Other Taxes	11
Answers Inapplicable	13
	n=536

The number of inapplicable answers is worth noting. In this instance the suggestion of new or increased taxes was enough to cause some respondents to write at some length about the outrageousness of such a suggestion, and hence they would suggest no new revenue sources. But over-all, most members were not hesitant to suggest a sales tax (selective in many cases) or an increase in provincial income tax. Sales tax and business and corporation tax were the main suggestions from those who gave secondary responses. Oddly, very few named increased royalties or

resource taxes as a possible revenue source and almost none mentioned increased borrowing. Within the party, some differences may be noted.

The data shows no remarkable divergencies among the membership except that young people (25%) favoured higher business and corporation taxes more than older people (only 4% for those over 50 and 6% for those over 65). Unskilled workmen also favoured an increase in business and corporation tax more than other occupational groups. 25% favoured increased business/corporation tax but only 7% of farmers did so. Farmers favoured increased tax on land more than any other group. The higher educated groups favoured a sales tax to a greater extent than other educational groups; 65% of those with a university degree favoured a sales tax but only 52% of those with grade 12 did so, and only 50% of those with grade 8. Lower education groups favoured business and corporation taxes slightly more than other income groups: for example, 12% with grade 8 favoured this tax but only 4% of those with a university degree did so.

The next question was put the other way. What kinds of programmes could be cut with the least damage done?

TABLE VII-10

SPENDING CUTS

Areas that could be cut	Percentage of Sample
Welfare	32
Education	17
Administration	15
Roads	7
Other Areas	18
Answers Inapplicable	9
Don't Know	2
n=514	

The number of respondents here is smaller than usual, primarily and importantly because two-sevenths of the respondents did not identify any programs which could be diminished without damage. As might be expected, welfare was by far the most obvious program which respondents felt could be controlled, followed by education costs and general government administration (this included the number and cost of civil servants and elected representatives). Health costs, although mentioned by

a few, were not mentioned by sufficient respondents to warrant a category. Others included numerous specific programs and expenditures, from cutting municipal spending to favoring abolishing the home owners' tax discount. Others mentioned perceived geographic inequities in spending; that is, that some areas of the province were favored over others in government spending. However, the general orientation of the members, notwithstanding this particular question, was favorable to expansion rather than restriction. Most members wanted more programs and an increase in most services, especially assistance to small towns, farmers, and assistance for industrial development to create more jobs, particularly in rural areas. Thus the hypothesis from chapter one, that the membership will exhibit a positive attitude toward increased government spending and activity, is partially confirmed.

Within the party, the following differences were noted:

The older members favored cutting education costs more than any other group. 22% of those over 50 identified this area but only 14% of those aged 20-29 did so.

The younger members favoured cutting welfare more than older members. 42% of those aged 20-29 mentioned welfare but only 38% of those over 50 mentioned this area.

The younger members favoured cutting administrative costs more than older members. 28% of those 20-29 noted administration. 16% in age group 30-49, and 19% of those over 50.

The professional occupational group mentioned cutting higher educational costs more than any other group. 23% of professionals favoured a cut in education, but only 14% of workers mentioned this. Only 13% white collar, and 15% of farmers suggested educational cuts.

Unskilled workmen favoured cutting costs on road building more often than other groups. (12% as against 7% for farmers).

Skilled workmen, 45%, and businessmen, 50%, favoured cutting welfare costs more than other occupational groups. 36% of farmers suggested a welfare cut and 40% of housewives suggested this.

Higher educated groups most often mentioned administrative costs as a way of cutting spending. 26% of those with some university noted this area compared to 15% of those with less than high school.

Those in the higher education groups mentioned cutting welfare spending more than other educational groups. 57% of those with a university degree suggested this compared to 42% of those with less than grade 8.

Those in the lowest income category (under \$3000.) most often favoured cutting education costs. 22% of them mentioned education costs compared to 18% of those over \$10,000.

Some further opinions from the membership about general issues, some political, and some more broadly social, will be presented in the next section and compared, when possible, with the same questions asked of the Calgary-Edmonton general electorate sample.

Table VII-11 and Table VII-12 deal with the respondents' perceptions of who tends to support the Social Credit Party, and who benefits most from the Alberta government.

TABLE VII-11
SUPPORT GROUPS

Groups which give good support to Social Credit	Percentage of Sample		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No Comment</u>
Low Income Groups	43	46	11
Medium Income Groups	69	20	11
High Income Groups	19	69	11
White Collar Workers	19	70	11
Manual Workers	29	60	11
Farmers	71	17	11
Professionals	19	79	11
Ethnic Groups	17	72	11
Other Minority Groups	8	81	11
n=715			

TABLE VII-12
BENEFIT GROUPS

Groups which tend to get more from the Alberta Social Credit Government than they deserve	Percentage of Sample		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No Comment</u>
Low Income Groups	22	45	33
Medium Income Groups	6	61	33
High Income Groups	25	42	33
White Collar Groups	19	48	33
Manual Workers	10	57	33
Professional	27	40	33
Farmers	12	55	33
Ethnic Groups	5	62	33
Other Minority Groups	11	56	33
n=715			

It may be seen that the respondents believe that low and medium income groups tend to support Social Credit but do not get more than they deserve. For high income groups and professionals, it is believed that they do not tend to support Social Credit but receive more than they deserve. Farmers, it is believed, tend to support Social Credit, but do not get more than they deserve. In fact, no group really gets more than it deserved according to the respondents.

As was described in chapter four, the writer carried out another survey which included a sample of the Calgary-Edmonton electorate. The Calgary-Edmonton general electorate sample was asked a similar question. They were asked which groups in society at large they thought benefited the most from political activities. One must be careful in reading this table; since although the question was asked in a context about Alberta problems, and when it was asked the Social Credit party had formed the government for thirty-four years, nevertheless the respondent may be talking about Canada in general rather than specifically

about Alberta politics. It does however, provide a way of seeing if the general public agrees with the members who felt that no group benefited more than they should.

TABLE VII - 13

WHO BENEFITS FROM POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

GENERAL CALGARY-EDMONTON ELECTORATE RESPONSE

Groups Benefiting	Percentage Response		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No Comment</u>
Low Income	16	76	8
Medium Income	16	76	8
High Income	56	37	8
White Collar	21	72	8
Manual Workers	10	82	8
Professionals	35	58	8
Ethnic Groups	7	85	8
Minority Groups	9	84	8
Farmers	18	74	8
n=514			

It is clear that the general electorate tends to believe, more so than do Social Credit Party members, that high income and professional groups reap the benefits of most political activity, while ethnic groups, other minorities, and low and medium income groups as well as farmers, get the least benefits. What is important to note is that most respondents seem to be saying (both party members and the general electorate respondents), that people who are in the groups they themselves are in do not benefit greatly from political activities. However, those in the higher income and professional groups (which for the most part the respondents in both samples do not belong to) benefit more than they should. The hypothesis (see chapter one) that the membership will feel that higher income and professionals are better treated by the political system than are lower income groups and farmers is partly confirmed. But in only one case, that of higher income groups as viewed by the general sample, was there a majority who thought they benefited most.

7.4 GENERAL SOCIAL ISSUES

This section is designed to determine the general orientation of party members to a number of selected social issues. It was stated in Chapter one that it was expected that the members will generally exhibit more liberal attitudes⁷ on key social questions than would be found among the general electorate. It will be seen that this hypothesis is not confirmed. Questions were asked both of the party members and the general Alberta sample. The first table (VII-14) outlines the views of the party members. For comparative purposes the responses of the general population will be presented in table VII-17. The tables deal with a selected group of social and political issues.

7

As mentioned in footnote 18 in Chapter One, one of Bay's definitions of liberalism is utilized. Attitudes of respondents to assistance to agriculture, to the educational foundation program and other issues important to rural Alberta were not tested; the general area of attitudes to particular rural life problems is an important area deserving of further study.

TABLE VII-14

SOCIAL ISSUES: PARTY MEMBERS RESPONSE

Social Issue	Percentage Response				
	<u>Strongly Approve</u>	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Strongly Disapprove</u>	<u>No Comment</u>
Quebec's request for a revised constitution	1	12	26	26	14
Legalized Abortion	5	32	17	26	20
Abolition of Death Penalty	2	16	31	35	15
Student Protests	1	9	34	36	19
CBC News and Current Affairs coverage	5	42	17	12	23
Divorce laws as they are now	2	29	32	14	23
Governmentally supported day care centres	6	30	21	11	23
Increased provincial support to higher education	11	38	24	11	15
Federal policies concerning Indians and Eskimos	1	14	33	23	27
Federal Medicare	2	9	28	48	14
Increased immigration to Canada from a greater number of countries	6	32	28	16	18

n=715

The next section shows intra-party differences on some of the above issues.

Intra-party Issue Differences

Members view on Quebec's request for a new or revised constitution varied directly with education as indicated in the following table:

TABLE VII - 15
INTRA-PARTY VIEWS ON A REVISED CANADIAN
CONSTITUTION BY EDUCATION

Education Level	Percentage Approving
Less than grade 8	7.6
Grade 8	10.7
Some High School	10.5
Grade 12	21.8
Some University	23.5
University	27.6
Post Graduate	37.5
n=715	
chi-square 42 p < .01	
d.f. 6	

The above table is the clearest relationship in the tables between the view held and the level of education: the higher the education the greater the number of members who favour a revised constitution.

Some other intra-party differences are as follows:

Younger members tended to approve increased immigration more than older ones. 38% of those over 50 favored more immigration, but 40% of those 30-49 did so, and 46% of those 20-29 favored increased immigration.

Higher educated members approved of increased immigration more than less educated members. 66% of those with a degree favored this, 42% of those with grade 12 did so, and only 25% of those with less than grade 8 did so.

Higher income members tended to approve of increased immigration more than lower income members. Beginning with those under 3,000 only 7% approved, but this increased in each income bracket up to 61% approving for those over \$15,000.

Those members born outside of Canada were slightly more in favor of immigration

than were those born in Canada. (But only 47% to 38%).

As to divorce laws, there is little difference within the party: 32% of those 20-29 favored tough divorce laws but only 28% of those over 65 did so.

All education and income groups tended to favor capital punishment and only a minority in each group favored abolition.

All age groups opposed abolition of capital punishment.

Younger members favored legalized abortion more often than older members. 55% of those in the age group 20-29 approved, 46% of those 30-49, 36% of those 50-64, and only 28% of those over 65 approved.

The relationship between abortion and the education variable is so clear that the entire table will be presented.

TABLE VII - 16

MEMBERSHIP OPINION OF LEGALIZED ABORTION BY EDUCATION

EDUCATION	Less than Grade 8	Grade 8	Some High School	Grade 12	Some University	University Degree	Post-Graduate Degree
Strongly Disapprove	39.0	34.6	30.2	21.1	21.6	16.1	12.5
Disapprove	16.9	22.1	22.6	13.8	21.6	9.7	12.5
Approve	24.7	32.4	32.1	46.3	33.3	48.4	62.5
Strongly Approve	1.3	0.0	5.2	9.8	15.7	16.1	0.0
No Comment	18.2	11.0	9.9	8.9	7.8	9.7	12.5
chi-square 60 p <.01							
d.f. 24							

The same trend holds for education and income levels and opinion on abortion. The higher the education, and the higher the income, the more the groups tend to favour legalized abortion.

All age groups favoured increased support to higher education with just a slightly higher degree of support expressed by younger members.

Approval of support for higher education increased with each educational level.

39% with less than grade 8 approved, 53% with grade 12 approved. 59% of those with a university degree approved, and finally, 87% of those with a post-graduate degree approved.

Approving increased support for higher education increased similarly with income.

Latter Day Saints (75%; Lutherans and Mennonites, 64%) most strongly approved of increased support to higher education.

Baptists (34%) and Catholics (48%) agreed with this least often.

Other Intra-party Differences:

Those in higher income groups approved of student protests more than other groups (18% approved, the highest of any group), while disapproval was widespread in all occupational and educational groups. Younger members had approved slightly more than other age groups.

Female members, 48%, approved of government supported day-care centres more often than did male members (37%).

The lower income groups approved of day-care centres more often than higher income groups. 47% of those under 3,000 approved. 39% of those between 7000-9999 approved, while only 35% of those over 15,000 approved.

Slightly more males than females approved of federal medicare (12% to 7%).

Having examined intra-party differences on these questions, the study now compares the membership as a whole to the Calgary-Edmonton general electorate sample.

Table VII - 17 presents the general electorate opinions on many of the same questions.

TABLE VII-17

GENERAL ELECTORATE AND RESPONSE
TO SOCIAL ISSUES

Social Issues	Percentage Response				
	Strongly Approve	Approve	Disapprove	Strongly Disapprove	No Comment
Quebec's request for a revised constitution	2	19	44	12	23
Abolition of death penalty	7	35	39	9	10
Legalized abortion	10	46	27	7	10
Student Protests	2	45	33	7	10
CBC News and Current Affairs coverage	12	66	9	2	11
New Divorce Laws	10	57	15	2	16
Increased Government support for higher education	1 19 10	65 65	11 11	1 1	4 4
Government support for Indians and Eskimos	16	56	17	4	7
Increased immigration to Canada from a greater number of countries	4	34	41	8	12

n=715

There are two ways of studying the above tables: the figures may be compared with those of party members, which includes those who have no comment on the subject and hence do not care much either way about the issue; or they may be compared by ignoring those who have "no comment" and thus comparing only those respondents who do have an opinion on the subject. If the two are compared including all respondents, then it becomes clear that the general electorate sample takes different views on most subjects from those of the party members. They sympathize with Quebec's request for a revised constitution, they favour abortion more (about 20% to 13%), than do the party sample (56% to 38%). The Alberta electorate is in favour of abolishing the death penalty in more cases than the party sample (43% to 18%). They favour student protest (46% to 10%); they want more liberalized divorce (66% versus 30%), and they are more in favour of increasing aid to higher education (95% to 49%). The general electorate has a more positive attitude to the CBC than do party members. The two have similar views about increasing immigration.

However, by ignoring those who had no comment about the issue, the comparison changes somewhat; for example, opinions about increased aid to higher education are then about the same, slightly more party members favour increased immigration than those in the general electorate sample. But the basic relationship on other questions remains similar.

Thus, the expectation that party members would be more liberal than the general population is not borne out. Given the selected social issues, it is quite clear that party members are more conservative than those in the general electorate sample. If we look at the general orientation of the party members we note for example that only a minority favour day-care centres and medicare, most are opposed to Quebec's aspirations about a new constitution, and more are opposed to liberalization of divorce and abortion laws.

7.5 SUMMARY

Of the four hypotheses put forward in Chapter one which are directly relevant to the findings presented in this chapter, three are confirmed, while the fourth is rejected. These hypotheses were:

- 1) That members would have a different view as to what the main problems were and would place a different and higher value on the importance of politics, political life and party activities than would the general electorate. It was shown that the general electorate tended to think in economic terms, identifying the primary problems as inflation, unemployment, prices and so on. The party membership, however, felt that the main problems were political - parties, organization, who had control and what political policies and practices were followed. Economic considerations were secondary to those concerns and by inference were at best partly a result of the consequences of the broader political situation. The party member then, has a better understanding and appreciation of the political system and its implications than does the general electorate.

2) As to who gets more than they deserve from the government and who tends to benefit from political activities, it was found that the members viewed the situation as acceptable; that is, in their view no-one got more than they deserved. This view was, partly shared by the general electorate, although a higher percentage generally felt that high income and professional groups benefited most from political activity.

3) It was expected that members would have a progressive or liberal opinion about government spending and activity. This was partly confirmed and a sizeable percentage of respondents were in favour of new programs and improved services. Some economic conservatism was decidedly present, however although this was more the case for non-economic conservative values as is clarified in item 4.

4) Because of higher levels of information, greater activities and political participation it was hypothesized in chapter one that the membership would exhibit

more liberal opinions on selected key social questions than would a sample from the general electorate. This hypothesis is rejected. Members by and large had a more conservative approach on many non-economic questions such as constitutional reform, social welfare measures and liberalization of social laws than did the general sample.

One final comment should be made on this section. Although the general approach in this chapter has been to show both differences between the party and the general electorate, and intra-party differences, it is perhaps just as important to note that the similarities between the party membership and the public is quite considerable. In summary, there isn't a great deal of difference between the views of the party member and the general Alberta public. In this sense the party is representative of the general public, just as it was found to be very representative in terms of income, education and other characteristics as was shown in chapter five.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ALBERTA SOCIAL CREDIT PARTY: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter one, three sets of hypotheses were put forward. These were designed to test some statements about:

1. The extent to which the Alberta Social Credit Party is representative of the general electorate
2. The socialization, participation and political activity patterns of the membership, and
3. The opinions of the membership about a variety of political and social issues and concerns.

Within each set, a number of sub-hypotheses were presented. The first set of hypotheses, it may be recalled,

included the claim that the party is representative of the Alberta electorate; that the party is composed primarily of fundamentalist Protestants, that the party is closely associated with religious organizations, that the party membership is largely rural based, that the party appeals primarily to older people, and finally, that people most strongly committed to Social Credit are those who were first attracted to it in the 1930's.

In Section 8.2 each of these hypotheses is reviewed and, in light of the information presented in chapters three, and five through seven, is either confirmed, partially confirmed, or not confirmed.

8.2 SUMMARY PROFILE AND CONCLUSIONS

The first hypothesis put forward in Chapter one dealt with the representativeness of the party. It was hypothesized that "the Alberta Social Credit Party is representative of the Alberta electorate." In Chapter five, the following varied results emerged which showed the basic demographic characteristics of the membership and the ways in which it is, and is not, representative of the population of Alberta. The following were confirmed:

- . Education levels of the membership are very similar to the general population and unusual compared to American parties reviewed by Milbrath. Those with a lower level of formal education are well-represented.
- . Income levels of the membership are similar to the Alberta population and again unlike other parties studied by Milbrath. Lower income groups have an unusually high representation in the party.

- . For both education and income, a comparison of the Socred membership with both Conservative and New Democratic Party membership would be useful in analyzing Alberta parties.

In other ways the party was found to be not representative of the Alberta population.

- . The membership had a higher percentage of those born outside Canada than does the Alberta population, and of these, the party has a larger percentage of American-born than does the electorate.
- . The membership has a higher percentage of those with an Anglo-Saxon ethnicity than does the Alberta electorate, and a smaller percentage of European-born than the electorate.
- . Party members come primarily from small towns, villages and rural areas. A larger percentage of membership comes from rural Alberta than does the proportion of people in all of Alberta.

- . Edmonton and Calgary are greatly under-represented in comparison to their size.
- . Males greatly outnumber females, a finding true for all political parties in Canada.
- . The age group under thirty is greatly under-represented in the membership.
- . Conversely, those over fifty are over-represented as compared to their proportion in the electorate.
- . For males, farmers are over-represented, and for females, housewives, as compared with the general population.
- . Skilled and unskilled workers are under-represented.
- . The membership has a higher percentage of minority Protestant church adherents than does the Alberta population.

- . The Catholic and Anglican churches are under-represented in the membership.
- . The membership has a higher percentage of married people than the general population, and a larger average family size.
- . A larger percentage of those in the membership own their homes than do those in the general population.

Thus, the demographic profile is as follows: The typical member is from a rural area or small town, male, a long time resident of Alberta, high school educated, of average income and born in Canada. He is of English origin, Protestant, married with a large family, a home-owner, and he may well be a farmer or business man.

The next series of statements which were to be tested dealt with selected characteristics of party members in greater detail. It has been generally believed that the party is composed primarily of fundamentalist Protestants. We found, as indicated in the demographic profile, that Protestants are generally over-represented compared with their frequency in the Alberta population and that some Protestant religions are over-represented in the membership on this same basis (Baptist, Mormons and others). The statement cannot be totally accepted. However, combining church membership with church attendance yields an important conclusion about the party, and the hypothesis is partially confirmed.

Again, the popular view about the Social Credit Party has been that it is closely associated with religious groups, and members had strong church affiliations and were regular church attenders.

Based on the respondents' church attendance and sharp difference from the Alberta public, and the small percentage who claimed no affiliation, which was shown in graph form in Chapter five, this statement is confirmed. Together, statements two and three tell a great deal about the party, both confirming the historical sketch of Chapter three which outlined the close connection of the party with religious groups in its origins, and demonstrating the strong continuing influence of that factor.

This evidence substantiates much of the writing which has been done on the question of religion and politics. S. D. Clark argues that the established churches were associated with creditor and business interests.¹ He interprets Aberhart and early Social Credit as an attempt by the economically downtrodden to protect themselves against establishment authority.^{1a}

1

S.D. Clark, "The Religious Sect in Canadian Politics", in Canadian Society, Sociological Perspectives, Bernard R. Blishen, et al, Editor (Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1961), Chapter 18.

1a

The evidence gathered here tends to support the proposition of the political success of Fundamentalist groups rather than the economic success of sectarian groups as proposed by Mann.

The religious sects, says W. E. Mann, "came to defend lower class groups against rising middle classes."² They may be seen partly as a corrective to centralization, uniformity and urbanization. These groups carried out important tasks of social reorganization, integration, and had a role in "presenting the peculiar independence and outlook of Alberta within the larger community structure of Canada."³

In this sense, the party also attempted to strengthen the position of the province in relation with the federal government just as the United Farmers of Alberta had tried to do.^{3a}

2

W. E. Mann, "Sect and Cult in Western Canada" in Canadian Society, op.cit., chapter 19.

3

Ibid., p.408 .

3a

In this connection, it is interesting to point out that the United Farmer government was in power when the control of natural resources was turned over to the provinces from the federal government - an important episode in the history of federal-provincial relations. Although beyond the scope of this work, the approach of successive administration and Premiers to federal-provincial relations and to federation itself, was and remains an important consideration in Alberta political life.

Because of the origins of the party and the close relationship with particular religious organizations, it was hypothesized that the Social Credit Party was largely rural based. This statement is confirmed. While half of the population lives in Alberta's two largest cities, less than twenty percent of the membership is from the same area. Just as important, however, is the large number of members from smaller cities, small towns, and villages. The party is just as much small town and village oriented as it is farm oriented.

Pinard found in his study of the rise of the Social Credit Party in Quebec federal politics that "...under conditions of strain, a movement will grow bigger and faster in rural than in urban areas."⁴

4

Maurice Pinard, The Rise of A Third Party, A Study in Crisis Politics (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1971), p. 205; for summary description of Quebec Social Credit supporters, see p. 250.

This applied also to smaller towns and villages, at least in part, because primary groups and the community structure have a greater influence on participants (and tend to reach a higher degree of consensus) than these same factors do in the more loosely-knit urban structures. Thus in Quebec, Social Credit did not do as well in Montreal as in rural areas and in small towns. This is similar to Irving's hypotheses about Social Credit in Alberta.⁵

The following hypotheses were confirmed. Given the preceding expectations, one could reasonably expect that the Social Credit Party appealed primarily to older people, lacking support among the young. This statement is confirmed. Particularly notable was the lack of representation of those under thirty.

5

Irving, The Social Credit Movement in Alberta, p.109.

Although this is a general pattern among political participants, it is unusual in that activity seems to increase with age, whereas it is generally the case that participation gradually tapers off for those over sixty.

It would be reasonable to conclude that the party was at one time very representative of Alberta society, but became gradually less so, until, at the time of the study, although Alberta society had changed a great deal, the membership of the party had not.

Because of all these factors, it was suspected that the people most strongly committed to Social Credit were those who were first attracted to it in the 1930's when William Aberhart organized the party. This statement is confirmed, partially by the length of party membership, partly because of the long time residency of most members and finally, given the age of a large percentage of the membership, it again appears to be justified.

The second set of hypotheses dealt primarily with the kind of people who participate both in the party generally, and with determining intra-party differences. Participation hypotheses included examining a number of demographic factors such as income, education, and age. Also examined were dimensions of participation which included party work, activity, and opinions on party organization and federal voting patterns.

Not confirmed for the party is the general fact about political participation that higher socio-economic status is positively associated with increased likelihood of participation in many political acts, including joining a party. This is especially true where there is a typical two-party competitive setting such as in many American states. In Alberta, as was elaborated in chapter three, the typical pattern has been one-party dominance rather than a two-party system. It was found that higher socio-economic groups do not form the mode of Social Credit members. Indeed, lower income and lower education level people are well-represented in the party. Thus, for the Social Credit Party it is not the case that higher socio-economic groups are the main participants. It is a party typical of the Alberta population for education and income, and thus atypical of most political parties, but similar in many ways to Lipset's Saskatchewan study of C.C.F. participants.

According to Milbrath, income is correlated with political participation. Higher income groups are slightly over-represented in the membership but generally the above statement is not confirmed for the Alberta Social Credit Party. The statement may nonetheless be true for political participation generally in Alberta.

As was explained in chapter one, Milbrath also found a trend for those with higher education to be more likely to participate in politics. There is a slight over-representation of the higher educated in the membership in relation to their proportion to the population in the membership, but insufficient to confirm the statement vis-a-vis the party. All education-level groups are well represented in the membership.

Taken together the above two statements show something very important about the nature of the party. In most political organizations the bulk of the membership generally comes from the middle and upper classes.

But as has been shown, the Alberta Social Credit Party is made up of a large proportion of lower income and education groups; the finding is similar to that of Lipset in the Saskatchewan C.C.F. Party.⁶

Confirmed was the suggestion in chapter one that the longer a person resides in a given community the greater the likelihood of his participation in politics. As was seen, most members were longtime residents. This statement is confirmed. It is clear that most of the membership is made up of longterm residents of Alberta.

Milbrath found that farmers were less likely to become active in politics than city dwellers. As far as the Social Credit Party is concerned, this statement is not confirmed; farmers are over-represented in the membership as compared to their proportion of the general electorate and in this sense again fit the Lipset Saskatchewan pattern.

6

Lipset, Chapter VIII,

It was expected that homeowners were more likely to participate than renters. This statement is confirmed for the membership. The other characteristics of the membership, large families, geographic location, age and so on, together with home ownership, confirm the general profile as shown at the beginning of this chapter, a profile which emerged from the data in chapter five.

Generally it is believed that young people are not likely to become enmeshed in politics until they have become established in a job, with a home, and start to raise a family. All of these characteristics are typical for the membership of the party and thus tend to confirm the Milbrath hypothesis. Further it was supposed that participation rises gradually with age, reaches its peak and levels off in the forties and fifties, and gradually declines about sixty. For the Social Credit Party, participation gradually rises with age but does not either level off or decline as is the typical pattern according to the above statement.

The most apathetic group politically are the young married citizens who are only marginally integrated into their community. Married persons are more likely to participate than single persons. Both of these statements are true for participation in the Social Credit Party, and it appears that the mature married citizen who is well integrated into the community is more typical of the party member than is the young married or single person.

Milbrath and others have found that men are more likely to participate in politics than women. This statement is true for the Social Credit Party as it is for other parties, although it may be that there is a higher percentage of females in the Social Credit Party than is usually the case for political parties.

A general finding about participation is the correlation between low education and income levels and the amount of party maintenance and election activity carried out by the membership. This same relationship applies to age as well; it is the older but lower socio-economic groups which carry out most of this fundamental party work.

The membership participation profile which follows, although complex and in categories that are not exclusive, summarizes the typical membership pattern based on the responses of the members. The following dimensions of activity will be used:⁷ overtness of activity, continuity of activity, expressive versus instrumental contributions, verbal versus non-verbal and social versus non-social. On these dimensions, most members in comparison to the public, generally tend to be very active, overt in activities, expressive in inputs, and verbal and social in participation. In sum, they make more inputs (such as activity, contributions, allegiance, and support) to the system than they avail themselves of outtakes (such as services, economic opportunities, and so on).

It was found that although a large percentage of members spent a lot of time in party work, most complained about the lack of participation and the lack of organized activities. Members were very concerned about the future of the party. A sizeable percentage of the membership supported the Conservative party in federal elections.

7

Dimensions discussed by Lester Milbrath, Political Participation, op.cit., p.15.

The third set of hypotheses dealt with the opinions of the respondents about a number of issues. It was expected that the perception of problems and priorities given to local, provincial and national problems would be quite different from those of the general electorate. It was hypothesized that members would exhibit more liberal attitudes on key social questions than would be found among the general electorate. It was expected that the membership would feel that higher income groups and professionals are better treated by the system than lower income groups and farmers. The final statement was that the membership would exhibit a positive attitude toward increased government spending and activity.

In chapter one it was hypothesized that the perception of problems, and priorities given to local, provincial and national problems would be quite different from those of the general electorate. This statement is confirmed. Seventeen percent of the general electorate for example, responded with a 'no problem' answer but less than one percent of the party members answered similarly. Members were much more aware of and concerned about politics, interest in politics, party

problems, government administrations, spending and tax problems, than was the general electorate. For party members responding to questions about national problems, the primary concern was the federal political scene, such as whom to support, the future of federal parties, party identification and so on. But for the general electorate the primary concern was decidedly economic in orientation. Inflation, cost of living, and similar problems were the main concerns of the general electorate and little concern about politics or parties per se was evident. These economic concerns were important but secondary for party members, and were seen as a consequence of political activity and leadership.

Not confirmed was the expectation that the membership would generally exhibit more liberal attitudes on key social questions than would be found among the general electorate. This statement, as is made clear in chapter seven, is rejected. The general urban sample had more liberal views on Quebec's request for a new or revised constitution; they opposed capital punishment more often than the members; they favoured

more liberalized divorce laws, and they were slightly more in favour of increasing aid to higher education. Party members, in summary, have a more conservative view on key social issues than do those in the general electorate. The majority of party members, for example, were not in favour of day-care centres and many were opposed to federal medicare.⁸

Confirmed was the supposition that the membership would feel that higher income groups and professionals are better treated by the system than are lower income groups and farmers. This is in fact how the membership perceived those groups. They felt that lower income groups and farmers did not benefit as much as they should.

Partially confirmed was the hypothesis that because of increased involvement and greater information and understanding of issues the membership would exhibit a more positive attitude toward increased government spending and activity. As many

8

This last issue is complicated because some opposed the program on constitutional grounds, and not because they were opposed to medical insurance; they felt this should be the responsibility of the province.

of the comments in chapter five through seven indicate, many members do favour increased government activity and more programs, but a strong majority also exhibited fairly strong hostility to increased spending and taxes. The membership is in fact divided on the issue of economic and social conservatism.

Lipset argues that "the smaller the community and organizational unit and the less economically and socially stratified the society, the better are the possibilities for grass-roots political activity."⁹ This statement was confirmed for the contemporary party membership, and more broadly, the statement is apparently true for the Social Credit Party membership historically.

In summary, although it was expected that education and income levels would be higher in the membership than among the population as a whole, it was found that the party is remarkably representative of the average Albertan for these two variables. It was found that members resided longer in the province than comparable groups in the general electorate, and that most members were from small towns, villages and farms.

9

S. M. Lipset, Agrarian Socialism, p.219,

It was found that whereas the members perceived political problems (parties, organization, leadership, and so on) to be the most important, the general electorate viewed economic problems (inflation, agricultural markets and prices, and so on) to be the most significant to them. A summary of these differences may be found in chapter seven, section two.

The membership had on the whole, more conservative views than did the general electorate, on a variety of selected issues. If we consider the modal opinion response, we find that the typical member is concerned with provincial politics, government administration and spending, and federal politics as priority items. He views a balanced budget as important, favours American investment, and would cut welfare spending. He is against a new constitution for Canada, is against more relaxed divorce and abortion laws. He favours increasing aid to education. But on the issues of day care centres and increased immigration the membership is divided such that there is no typical response. A complete summary of these differences was presented in chapter seven.

8.3. IMPLICATIONS

Throughout the presentation of the findings there has been an emphasis on determining the extent to which the Alberta Social Credit Party is representative of the general Alberta electorate. Where differences have been found they have been clearly indicated, but there is a further comparison which is at least as important, and that is, how different, in representativeness and other factors, is the Social Credit Party from other parties? Where most parties (as has been shown by Milbrath) are more representative of higher socio-economic groups, the evidence presented would confirm the hypothesis that the Social Credit Party has, to a limited extent, maintained its populist tradition. An unusually large proportion of members are in the lower socio-economic groups, as measured by income and education. The historical development of the party, outlined in chapter three, shows that the party was assuredly populist in origin. And although it changed with time in office, new leaders, and a changing environment, the party retained

much of its populist support in actual membership, if not in leadership. The populist notion of Social Credit is justified as far as the general membership goes.

It appears, however, that for the Social Credit Party, membership lags behind social change. Current trends in both urbanization and socialization are not reflected in the over-all membership.

Macpherson argued that given the homogeneous class composition in Alberta and the quasi-colonial status of the economy, no alternate party was needed to moderate interest conflicts.¹⁰ But it could be argued that with the increasing urbanization and differentiation within the economy, these conditions had changed by the sixties to the extent that many interests could be accommodated through and by an alternate party which happened to be the Conservative Party. The rise of the Conservative Party is due in part to the lack of change within the Social Credit Party to accommodate new urban groups and younger people, but also because of the leadership of the Conservative Party, and the careful use of the mass media.

10

C. B. Macpherson, chapter one.

Thus the conceptualization of the political life of the province which Macpherson gives us is not sufficiently empirically based, and does not provide for social change.

There are a number of popularly held perceptions of the Social Credit Party, some of which have been confirmed by the study, and some of which must be modified. This primarily involves both the representatives of the party and the direction of the membership's views. The profiles developed in chapters five, six and seven indicate that the party has identifiable characteristics and orientations as a group. To a large extent these may be summarized as conservative and rural values¹¹ - large families, home ownership, rural orientation, conservative opinions about administration, spending and taxation, and a high level of interest in and concern about politics and the party.

A shift in the direction of conservatism
(especially in the economic sense) and traditionalism

11

S.D. Clark, in his introduction to J.R. Mallory, Social Credit and the Federal Power in Canada, op.cit., argues that it has become increasingly clear, in retrospect, that the Social Credit Party never really was radical, and was essentially conservative in outlook, and became increasingly so, in line with the temper of the population.

may take place through the institutionalization of a once-radical organization: "The Social Credit Movement in Alberta is probably the most recent example of such a change",¹² a metamorphosis from a radical to a conservative movement. A good case study of this on an individual level might well be the study of Ernest Manning. But the kind of conservatism represented by E.C. Manning and followers would be far different from the kind of conservatism represented by A. J. Hooke and his followers.

Although both might have non-economic conservative traits, the economic conservatism of Manning would be different from the resistance-to-change conservatism of Hooke. The question of how much the rank and file League Members changed is however a separate question. The leadership may well have changed more than the membership. But in no sense could one conclude that the party was

¹²

Lipset, op.cit., p.279.

composed of extreme right wingers or reactionaries. Nor could one conclude that the party was representative of moneyed or vested interest, or the upper socio-economic groups in the Province. The length of residence and membership of many members indicates a strong stability within the membership. An analysis of the age of members indicates that a great many of the members must have been quite young when they first got involved with the party, and have remained committed to the party over a long period of time.

What emerges is a stable membership, one which is in many ways conservative, as to some social issues for instance. For other members, economic and fiscal conservatism is evident. But many members are progressive in important respects, and deeply concerned about the lack of activity and interaction within the party. Many of the members were depressed about the federal political scene, not knowing really what direction to take, or which party to support. A strong minority have, however, clearly decided to support, and in fact have supported, the Conservatives. For the committed members this must raise an important problem; presumably such a member would want some kind of unity

and rationality in his political activities and desire to participate in and support a party. In this context such a situation was not present, which may hold a key to understanding future changes within the party. For example, and this is speculative, it might mean that the party may have to move both federally and provincially to maintain a unity of thought, action, and commitment from members. If not, members may decide to support a party which can satisfy this conjectured need, or they may face considerable frustration in their political life.

In addition to the problem of federal as well as provincial party action, there is the complicating factor of the changing role of the party in relation to other groups, including the three other parties (the Progressive Conservatives, the New Democrats, and the Liberals), important interest groups, the bureaucracy, and financial and other supporters. The growth of occupational, professional, and other interest groups has rapidly expanded, and many have direct access to both the bureaucracy and the cabinet. Thus for many people

the party is not necessary for their personal or economic representations. Although parties may still act as a bridge between the public and the government, the extent to which this is done requires study. For the citizen who has an interest in the body politic larger than his own particular interests, the party remains an instrument for the furtherance of public policy. Then too, it functions to recruit and gain the support of individuals to fill public offices.

The total social and economic life of the Province has changed considerably since the organization of the party. If the party under study is to gain widespread acceptance it must incorporate or represent, or at least appear to represent, these changes. A study of the two or three leading parties in about 1974, prior to an election in 1975 or 1976, could determine who and what is being represented in these parties. Indeed the more competitive the parties, the greater the likelihood of high rates of participation.¹³ Thus, the seventies could be conducive in Alberta to a higher rate of political participation, more political debate, and a higher concern

13

Milbrath, op.cit., p. 96.

organizers believe that a few votes may change the outcome, there is the possibility that they will work harder. Furthermore, a perception by people that the vote will be close may increase interest and probably improve information levels, strengthening the belief that the act of participation will count. This is probably not true in a situation where no important differences between competitors is perceived, and present evidence suggests no serious ideological differences between the two parties. Furthermore, if the past voting behaviour of Albertans is repeated, participation will decrease once a change has been made.

The stability of the electorate as measured by location, occupation across generations, and residency length, is also a factor in determining the amount and kind of participation. The stability of the existing Social Credit membership has been demonstrated. But what has not been demonstrated and what remains to be decided is whether the Social Credit Party can appeal to, and recruit more extensively from, the younger age groups.

Another crucial factor which remains to be determined is the extent to which party support was a function

of other factors, such as support of principles, policies and leadership figures. Finally, the role of the party membership in Alberta political life should be considered. Clearly the party membership has influence on some important questions - leadership selection, candidate selection, and some policy direction. But in other areas, particularly when the party forms the government, membership has considerably less influence and other factors become more significant: especially Cabinet decisions, participation through interest groups, financial support of parties and so on.

It would seem that a sizeable proportion of actual membership comes from classes similar to those which Pinard found in his study of Quebec Social Credit supporters - what he calls two doomed classes - small businessmen and farmers.¹⁵ Whether the party has sufficient ideological followers who will remain with the party out of office is a salient question.

15

Pinard, p.248.

Pinard also states that the typical supporter tended to be the common man: the well-integrated but dissatisfied upper-lower class.

It is especially crucial to a party which has relied on an organized membership base at least as much as it has relied on strong leaders and distinctive ideas.

8.4 FUTURE STUDY

There are a number of questions which immediately come to mind now that we have data on the members of the Social Credit Party. Some of these include:

1. What similar findings and conclusions can be developed about other parties in Alberta?
2. What are the social bases and the participation patterns in the Progressive Conservative and New Democratic parties? The Conservative Party deserves study because of its dramatic increase in votes as well as the fact that it is now the governing party. The New Democratic Party has a membership base which has been active for many years in Alberta politics.
3. What are the similarities and differences among Alberta parties? And what does this mean to policy making in Alberta and the kind of political decision making and party system being developed in the Province?

Now that the Social Credit Party has changed in relation to the government, a follow up study could be done to see what differences this change will make to the membership, and what organizational, structural, and personnel changes have taken place as a result of this change. How, if at all, has the membership itself changed in its composition?

Then, too, it would be worthwhile where feasible to do scales and tests such as efficacy, faith, anxiety, ego strength, information tests and others¹⁶ to learn about and compare the psychology and behaviour of Social Credit Party members and members of other political parties. Alberta political participants as a group could be compared to the general public.¹⁷ It is hoped that the present work will form a basis for further study and research in Alberta politics.

16

See Robert Lane, Political Ideologies, op.cit., Appendix, for a list of tests and scales.

17

For an approach to this research see Herbert McClosky, "Consensus and Ideology in American Politics," in Readings in Modern Political Analysis, Robert A. Dahl and Deane E. Neubauer, Editors (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968).

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APPENDIX A

The Party Questionnaire

A L B E R T A S O C I A L C R E D I T
L E A G U E
M E M B E R S H I P S U R V E Y

It is not necessary to sign this questionnaire.
Your name is not required. What we are interested
in is a representative sample of facts and opinions
from League members. Keep in mind that your answers
are anonymous, and that this survey is confidential.

Dear League Member:

At the last provincial convention, delegates voted to begin reorganizing the Alberta Social Credit League. As a first step, the League is undertaking a survey of its membership. You are one of those selected at random from our membership files to be surveyed. Your signature is not required and you will remain anonymous. If the survey is to be accurate it is important that you carefully complete and mail the questionnaire to the League office. I urge you to cooperate with the Executive in this endeavour.

Yours very truly,

E.C. Manning,
Premier of Alberta

Dear Social Creditor:

In order to evaluate our present position, and to plan for the next election, it is important that we have accurate knowledge about our League members. We are interested in your opinion on a number of subjects, and some facts about you. Your assistance in completing the enclosed questionnaire and returning it to us promptly will be appreciated.

A stamped addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Sincerely yours,

Orvis A. Kennedy, President
Alberta Social Credit League

Q U E S T I O N N A I R E

- 1) Male Female(please check)
- 2) In what age group do you belong?
- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 15-19 | 50-64 |
| 20-29 | 65 and |
| 30-49 | over |
- 3) What is your occupation?.....
- 4) What is the occupation of your spouse?.....
- 5) What is the name of your provincial constituency?.....
.....
- 6) How long have you lived in this province?.....
- 7) How long have you been a member of the Social Credit League?
(please check)
- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Less than six months | 10-20 years |
| 6 months to 1 year | 20 years and |
| 1 - 5 years | over |
| 5 - 10 years | If over 20 |
| | years, please |
| | specify. |
- 8) Do you feel that you have been able to get as much education
as you wanted?
- Yes No Don't Know

- 9) What kind of formal schooling did you get?
(Please check the highest level finished.)
- Less than Grade 8
 Grade 8
 Some high school
 Grade 12
 Some university
- 10) In what group does the yearly income of your family
fall? (please check)
- Under \$3000,- \$10,000,- to \$14,999,-
 \$3000,- to \$4999,- \$15,000,- to \$40,000,-
 \$5000,- to \$6999,-
 \$7000,- to \$9999,-
- 11) Were you born in Canada? Yes No
 If not, where were you born?
- 12) What nationality group do you belong to?
- 13) Do you go to church regularly or not? (please check)
- More than once a week Once a month
 Once a week Less than once
 a month
- 14) Whether or not you go to church regularly, what is your
religious preference?

15) What is the size of your family?

Single	.....	Married with 3-5 children	.....
Married without children	.....	Married with more than 5 children	.....
Married with 1-2 children	.....	

16) Do you own or rent your accommodation?

Own Rent

In either case, what type of accommodation do you have?

Farm Suite or apartment

House Other (specify)

17) What city, town, village, or rural district do you live in?

.....

18) What kind of neighborhood do you live in? Is it mostly:
(please check one)

Rural Residential-commercial

Suburban-residential Residential-industrial

19) Why did you join the Social Credit League? (please answer as brief or as long as you want.)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- 20) How did you originally get involved in politics?
(Example: influence of parents, or principles of
the party).

.....
.....
.....

- 21) Have you held any official positions in the League,
or in any local branch of the League? If so, what
position?

.....

- 22) From which of the following sources do you get most of
your information?

Newspapers	.....	TV and radio	.....	Other	.....
Friends	.....	Books	.....	

- 23) Have you ever been a delegate to the annual provincial
convention?

Yes No

- 24) Do you have any suggestions as to changes for M.L.A.
nomination procedure?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

25) Did you actively campaign during the last provincial election?

Yes No

How much time did you spend campaigning ?.....

.....

How many hours per week during the actual campaign?

.....

26) To your mind what are the main problems facing:

YOUR OWN CONSTITUENCY:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

ALBERTA:

.....

.....

.....

.....

CANADA:

.....

.....

.....

.....

- 27) How important do you feel it is that the government keeps a balanced budget:

Very important	.....	Not important at all	.....
Important	.....	No comment	.....
Little importance.....			

- 28) Do you feel that American investment is a good or bad thing for:

	<u>ALBERTA</u>	<u>CANADA</u>
Very good
Good
Bad
Very Bad
Difficult to say
No comment

- 29) Which of these groups do you think tend to give good support to the Social Credit League and its candidates? (Check as many as you feel apply):

Low income groups	.....	Farmers	.....
Medium income groups	.....	Professionals	.....
High income groups	.....	Other minority groups (please specify)	.....
White collar groups	.....	
Manual workers	.....	

- 30) Which of these groups do you think tend to get more from the Alberta Social Credit government than they deserve from the amount of support they give it?
(Check as many as you think fit.)

Low income groups	.....	Professionals	.....
Medium income groups	.....	Farmers	.....
High income groups	.....	Ethnic groups	.....
White collar groups	.....	Minority groups (please specify)	.....
Manual workers	.....	

- 31) Do you approve or disapprove of the following issues:

	STRONGLY DISAPPROVE	DISAPPROVE	APPROVE	STRONGLY APPROVE	NO COMMENT
Quebec's request for a revised constitution
Legalized abortion
Abolition of the death penalty
Canada's atti- tude to U.S. role in Vietnam
Student protests
CBC news and current affairs coverage
Canada's role in NATO
Divorce laws as they are now

	STRONGLY DISAPPROVE	DISAPPROVE	APPROVE	STRONGLY APPROVE	NO COMMENT
Governmentally supported day care centres
Increased pro- vincial support to higher education
Federal policies concerning Indians and Eskimos
Federal Medicare
Increased immigra- tion to Canada from a greater number of countries.

32) What do you feel about the following issues to the extent that they face the Social Credit League?

	STRONGLY DISAPPROVE	DISAPPROVE	APPROVE	STRONGLY APPROVE	NO COMMENT
Social Credit should recon- sider its name
It should field more parties federally
It should support other parties federally

33) How do you usually vote in federal elections?

.....

34) Which federal party do you think Social Credit could most likely work with?

Conservatives Liberals New Democrats

None

35) Do you like the term Social Conservative? Yes

No No opinion What does it mean to you?

.....

.....

.....

36) If it becomes necessary to raise new taxes for various programmes, what kind of taxes or what sources would you suggest for additional revenue?

.....

.....

37) The government has been talking about cutting down on spending. What kinds of programmes would you suggest could be cut with the least damage done?

.....

.....

38) Name one or two persons whom you think might become Premier should Mr. Manning retire?

.....

.....

39) Do you have any complaints or suggestions concerning the Social Credit League, in terms of:

a) The leadership:

.....
.....
.....

b) The candidates offered:

.....
.....
.....

c) Communications between leaders and members:

.....
.....
.....

d) Communications between the League and members:

.....
.....
.....

40) Is there anything in particular that you like about the Social Credit League?

.....
.....
.....
.....

41) Is there anything in particular that you dislike about the Social Credit League?

.....

.....

.....

.....

42) In future federal elections, should Social Credit:
(please check)

Work by itself	.....	Develop a new party	.....
Work with Liberals	.....	Give up	.....
Work with Conservatives	.....	

43) What could be done to make more people interested in politics?

.....

.....

.....

44) What do you so as a member of the League?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

APPENDIX B

The General Electorate

Calgary-Edmonton

Questionnaire

ALBERTA PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

Case No. _____

Study No. _____

Date of Interview _____

Time Interview Commenced _____ a.m.
p.m. Concluded _____ a.m.
p.m.

Number of Callbacks: (Circle) 0 1 2 3 4

Appointment: or times when usually home.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Day & Hour of Appointment: _____

Reason for no appointment (1) Refused
(2) Not at Home or Vacant
(3) Other (specify)

Instructions:

The interviewer is in no way to deviate from the written text of this questionnaire. Code numbers, where applicable, are to be written in the left hand margin by the interviewer opposite the question it answers. Further instructions, when required, will be underlined and usually enclosed in parenthesis.

Introduction:

Hello Mrs./Mr. _____

I am _____

I am doing some work for the University of Alberta and I wonder if you would help me. May I come in?

Inside:

We are conducting a public opinion survey about some of the things people in Alberta are talking about these days. Please keep in mind during this interview that everything you say will be held in strict confidence and that your name will not be used. We are interested only in the thinking of a representative sample of Edmontonians (Calgarians).

Q U E S T I O N N A I R E

1. Sex (1) Male (5) Female
2. How long have you lived in this city?
Code Number.
(1) Less than six months (4) 5 to 10 years
(2) 6 months to 1 year (5) 10 to 20 years
(3) 2 to 5 years (6) 20 or more years
3. About how long at this address?
(1) Less than six months (4) 5 to 10 years
(2) 6 months to 1 year (5) 10 to 20 years
(3) 2 to 5 years (6) 20 or more years
4. What is your marital status?
(1) Married (4) Divorced
(2) Single (5) Separated
(3) Widowed
5. Do you feel you were able to get as much education as you wanted?
(1) Yes (5) No (3) Don't Know (5) No Comment
6. What was your last grade completed in school?
(1) Less than Grade 8 (5) Some University
(2) Grade 8 (6) University Degree
(3) Some High School (7) Post-graduate Degree
(4) Grade 12
7. Have you business or other vocational training?
(1) Yes (5) No

8. What is your job - your occupation? (Fill in, be specific)

-
- (1) Professional
 - (2) White Collar (TO BE CODED LATER UNLESS
 - (3) Skilled Workman OBVIOUS THEN PUT CODE IN
 - (4) Unskilled Workman MARGIN)
 - (5) Farmer
 - (6) Housewife
 - (7) Other
 - (8) Business Manager, Senior Manager, Proprietor, etc.
 - (9) Unemployed
 - (0) Inapplicable

9. What is the occupation of your spouse? (Be specific)

-
- (1) Professional
 - (2) White Collar (TO BE CODED LATER UNLESS
 - (3) Skilled Workman OBVIOUS THEN PUT CODE IN
 - (4) Unskilled Workman MARGIN)
 - (5) Farmer
 - (6) Housewife
 - (7) Other
 - (8) Business Manager, Senior Manager, Proprietor, etc.
 - (9) Unemployed
 - (0) Inapplicable

10. Who is the chief wage earner in the family?

- (1) Husband
- (2) Wife
- (3) Other
- (0) Inapplicable

11. Have you ever been a union member?

- (1) Yes
- (5) No
- (8) Don't Know

12. Do you belong to any organization - e.g., the P.T.A., a civic group, lodges, veterans' organizations, etc.?

(1) Yes (5) No (8) Don't Know

13. If yes, which ones?

14. Although you are a Canadian citizen, which nationality do you consider yourself?

(1) British	(6) Scandinavian
(2) French	(7) Other
(3) German	(8) Italian
(4) East European	(9) Indian & Metis
(5) Asian	(0) Not Ascertained

15. Whether or not you go to church, what is your religious preference?

(1) Roman Catholic
(2) Anglican
(3) United Church
(4) Greek & Ukranian Orthodox
(5) Baptist, Brethren, Pentecostal
(6) Other Protestant
(7) Other (Hindu, etc.)
(8) Jews
(9) Unaffiliated - Atheist, Agnostic
(0) Not applicable

16. Into which group does your total family income fit?
(Hand separate income card to respondent & record response.)

(1) Under \$3,000	(4) \$7,000 to \$9,999
(2) \$3,000 to \$4,999	(5) \$10,000 to \$14,999
(3) \$5,000 to \$6,999	(6) \$15,000 and Over

17. (Observe and record respondent's race according to list below.)

- (1) Caucasian
- (2) Negroid
- (3) Oriental
- (4) American Indian

18. What is your age? (Hand separate card to respondent and record response.) (If respondent hesitates, interviewer will estimate - do not repeat question.)

- (1) 20-29
- (2) 30-49
- (3) 50-64
- (4) 65 and Over

19. For a variety of reasons, many people do not vote in elections; did you vote in the June federal election?

- (1) Yes
- (5) No
- (8) Don't Know

20. About half of the voters did not vote in the last provincial election. Did you vote in the provincial election in May, 1967?

- (1) Yes
- (5) No
- (8) Don't Know

21. (If the respondent answered no to either 19 or 20, ask:)

What were some of the things that influenced your decision not to vote?

22. You probably know people who did not vote in the election(s), what are some of their reasons for not voting? (Record answer verbatim.)

23. (If the respondent replied positively to Question 20, ask:)

How did you vote in the last provincial election?

- (1) Social Credit
- (2) Liberal
- (3) Progressive Conservative
- (4) New Democratic
- (7) Don't Know
- (9) Not Ascertained

24. Do you intend to vote in the next provincial election?

- (1) Yes (5) No (7) Don't Know

25. (If respondent replied positively to question 24, ask:)

Which party do you intend to support in the next provincial election?

- (1) Social Credit
- (2) Liberal
- (3) Progressive Conservative
- (4) New Democratic
- (5) Vote for the best candidate
- (7) Don't Know
- (9) Not Ascertained

26. (If there has been a change in support noted between the response to questions 23 and 25, ask:)

What influenced your decision to support a different party? (Record response verbatim.)

27. To your mind, what are some of the main problems facing your city? (Record response verbatim.)

28. What are some of the main problems facing Alberta?
(Record response verbatim).

29. What are some of the main problems facing Canada?
(Record response verbatim.)

30. Do you own or rent your house?

(1) Own (2) Rent

How do you feel about the following issues?

(1) Strongly Approve (2) Approve (3) Disapprove

(4) Strongly disapprove (5) No Comment

(7) Don't Know

31. Quebec's request for a revised constitution.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(7)
32. Abolition of the death penalty.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(7)
33. Legalized Abortion	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(7)
34. Student Protests	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(7)
35. CBC news and current affairs coverage	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(7)
36. The New Divorce Laws	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(7)
37. Increased government support for higher education.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(7)
38. Increased government support for Indians and Eskimos.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(7)
39. Increased Immigration to Canada from a greater number of countries.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(7)

40. Is there anything in particular you like about politics?
If so, what? (Record response verbatim.)
41. Is there anything in particular you dislike about politics?
If so, what? (Record response verbatim.)
42. What could be done to make people more interested in politics?
(Record response verbatim.)

43. Which groups do you think benefit most from the activities of political parties and government. (Check as many as respondent sees fit to give) (Hand card to respondent and record response.)

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (1) Low Income Groups | (5) Manual Workers |
| (2) Medium Income Groups | (6) Professionals |
| (3) High Income Groups | (7) Ethnic Groups (_____) specify |
| (4) White Collar Groups | (8) Minority Groups (_____) specify |
| | (9) Farmers |

Do you (1) agree or (2) disagree with each of the following statements? (Interviewer: Make notes on any significant comments.)

44. I don't mind a politician's method if he manages to get the right thing done.

- | | | |
|-----------|---------------|----------------|
| (1) Agree | (2) Disagree | (7) Don't Know |
| | (0) No Answer | |

45. To bring about great changes for the benefit of mankind often requires cruelty and even ruthlessness.

- | | | |
|-----------|---------------|----------------|
| (1) Agree | (2) Disagree | (7) Don't Know |
| | (0) No Answer | |

46. Very few politicians have clean records, so why get excited about the mudslinging that sometimes goes on?
- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
- (0) No Answer
47. It is all right to get around the law if you don't actually break it.
- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
- (0) No Answer
48. I believe in free speech for all no matter what their views may be.
- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
- (0) No Answer
49. Nobody has the right to tell another person what he should and should not read.
- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
- (0) No Answer
50. You can't really be sure whether an opinion is true or not unless people are free to argue against it.
- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
- (0) No Answer
51. I would not trust any person or group to decide what opinions can be freely expressed and what must be silenced.
- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
- (0) No Answer

52. If a person is convicted of a crime by illegal evidence, he should be set free, and the evidence thrown out of court.
- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
- (0) No Answer
53. People are always getting abortions anyway; it would be better and safer if they could get them legally in a hospital.
- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
- (0) No Answer
54. It isn't realistic to demand that marriages last "till death do us part."
- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
- (0) No Answer
55. What a person or persons do in the privacy of their own home is their own business and not the governments' be it homosexuality or what-have-you.
- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
- (0) No Answer
56. It is foolish and cruel to force women to bear children which they do not want or cannot afford to support.
- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
- (0) No Answer
57. Most politicians are looking out for themselves above all else.
- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
- (0) No Answer

58. Both major parties in this country are controlled by the wealthy and run for their benefit.

(1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know

(0) No Answer

59. Many politicians are bought off by some private interest.

(1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know

(0) No Answer

60. I avoid dealing with public officials as much as I can.

(1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know

(0) No Answer

61. Most politicians can be trusted to do what they think best for the country.

(1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know

(0) No Answer

62. I usually have confidence that the government will do what is right.

(1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know

(0) No Answer

63. The people who really "run" the country do not even get to know the voters.

- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
(0) No Answer

64. The laws of this country are supposed to benefit us all equally, but the fact is that they are almost all "rich man's laws."

- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
(0) No Answer

65. No matter what the people think or want, a few people will always run things anyway.

- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
(0) No Answer

66. Most politicians don't seem to me to really mean what they say.

- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
(0) No Answer

67. There is practically no connection between what a politician says and what he will be once he gets elected.

- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
(0) No Answer

68. A poor man does not have the change he deserves in the law courts.

- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
(0) No Answer

69. Most political parties only care about winning elections and nothing more.

- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
(0) No Answer

70. It's no use worrying my head about public affairs. I can't do anything about them anyhow.

- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
(0) No Answer

71. I feel that many political leaders hardly care what people like myself think and want.

- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
(0) No Answer

72. Nothing I ever do seems to have any effect on what happens in politics.

- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
(0) No Answer

73. There does not seem to be much connection between what I want and what my M.L.A. and the government do.

- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
(0) No Answer

74. It seems to me that whoever you vote for, things go on pretty much the same.

- (1) Agree (2) Disagree (7) Don't Know
(0) No Answer

75. Which is more important for you:

(1) Federal Government

(2) Provincial Government

(3) Civic Government

76. Which comes second?

(1) Federal Government

(2) Provincial Government

(3) Civic Government

77. Is the government of Alberta, for example, doing enough for the people?

(1) Yes

(2) No

(8) Don't Know

78. What sort of things ought the government to be doing?
(Record response verbatim.)

Interviewers Signature

Interviewers Code No. _____

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